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Alia Aiming For 'European' Rights Standards

PM2703124291 Rome LA REPUBBLICA in Italian 26 Mar 91 p 15

[Interview with Peoples' Assembly Presidium Chairman Ramiz Alia by Edgardo Bartoli in Tirana "a few days away from free elections;" first two paragraphs are LA REPUBBLICA introduction]

[Text] The reticence, the hesitation, and the tendency to take dialectical shortcuts are quite understandable: This is the first time that Albanian president Ramiz Alia has agreed to talk and to enter into debate. Indeed, for the first time in 45 years Albania itself is opening up, via the voice of its highest spokesman, to the questions that have beset it for decades but never been answered.

Ramiz Alia is no longer just the heir of Enver Hoxha and guardian of an orthodoxy that looks both failed and superseded. As well the protagonist, he is considered even by the opposition forces as the guarantor of the "transition" now in progress. This transition will enter its critical phase only after the 31 March elections. Ramiz Alia talked affably about them.

[Bartoli] What has happened in Albania in the past few months? How did you come to these elections?

[Alia] What has happened is that, in the past few months, in the past year, Albania has continued on its "logical" path in the sense that we have arrived at democracy not by chance but because that is where the country's development in past years has been taking us, generating these new events and determining this line of democratizing the country.

[Bartoli] Development...?

[Alia] Yes, the country's economic, political, and cultural development, because Albania was extremely backward from all these viewpoints. There is no point in denying that illiteracy among the population in 1945 was as high as 80 percent and life expectancy averaged 40 years. Now 70 percent of young people complete the first 12 years of schooling, that is to say they graduate from high school, and life expectancy is 70-72 years. To achieve this we have had to make sacrifices and impose economic and other restrictions on ourselves. People talk a lot about individual freedom, and that is right, but for us, social freedoms came first in that situation. We had to provide education and take care of the people's physical well-being, we had to develop agriculture, the industry that we lacked, etc., etc., and to do this our people had to make sacrifices, and did make sacrifices. For the sake of what? For this: for the sake of reaching the point we have reached today. Only now can we afford to talk about individual rights. After social rights, the time has come for them too. Now we can aim for European standards. That is the significance of what is happening today.

[Bartoli] But still, we know that there has been resistance within the Workers Party [PPSh]....

[Alia] I would not say resistance. There are neither disagreements nor factions that could be defined as conservative within our party. There are differences of opinion, of course, but all the decisions we adopted in the Politburo and at the Central Committee plenum were adopted without a single vote against or abstention.

[Bartoli] That is a little odd. Then why the recent mass dismissal of ministers?

[Alia] It was not a dismissal. It happened after 20 February, after the Enver Hoxha statue was pulled down. It was a reaction against that gesture, which I would call barbarous because Enver Hohxa is a popular figure who waged the struggle against fascism, the struggle for the new Albanian state, against illiteracy, and against the backward social conditions in the country. Pulling down his statue meant, in that context, striking a blow against popular sentiment.

[Bartoli] Nevertheless, it was a popular demonstration that toppled the statue.

[Alia] "Popular" can mean a lot of things. Even if 20 people do something while 2,000 stand and watch, that could be called "popular." The reaction to that gesture, on the other hand, was truly popular. In Korcia another statue of Enver that had been pulled down was immediately put back in its place.... It was a very delicate moment, which could have ended in bloodshed. I was faced with a dilemma: to either declare a state of emergency, or to do something different. I decided to do something different—to set up the Presidential Council, and at the same time to create a new government. I did that to reassure public opinion that things could in fact be settled in a peaceful manner. We had to avoid at all costs the clash that certain forces wanted. They included foreign forces, if indeed they were not mainly foreign forces.

[Bartoli] What forces?

[Alia] I would rather not say.

[Bartoli] Yet on 21 December it was by you yourself, or on your initiative, that the statue of Stalin was removed. Why?

[Alia] It was a gesture that bore no relation to the internal situation but was for the benefit of outside opinion, foreign opinion, which considered Albania a Stalinist country. It was made to give the lie to that platitude.

[Bartoli] Be that as it may, a start has been made along the democratic path. Can you guarantee that it is an irreversible process?

[Alia] Definitely. I have already said that the country's democratization was a logical consequence of the development of the country itself. So if we want to move forward, there is no other way. I repeat: This process is irreversible. Otherwise, it would be not only a backward step but an absolute disaster.

[Bartoli] So, looking back at the past, you—the government, regime, and party—have no apologies to make.

[Alia] Oh, quite the contrary. There is no government, party, or individual that, looking back, does not say: "If...."

[Bartoli] To what do these "ifs" apply in Albania's case?

[Alia] To all areas of life.

[Bartoli] Including the tens and hundreds of thousands of people who have suffered imprisonment, all those executed, and all the victims... Is there not cause for regret on their account?

[Alia] The fact that many people in Abania have been imprisoned or executed can, of course, give rise to some regret in some cases. I cannot say anything more precise, but you must always keep Albania's special situation in mind. I do not thus mean to justify anything or anyone; I am just saying that the conditions of Albanian development have been rather unusual. Albania was exposed to many outside pressures until 1952. And what about 1948? After the break with Yugoslavia things were not easy, because Belgrade wanted to overthrow the Tirana government. In 1960, when we broke with the Soviet Union and closed its base at Valona, the USSR did its utmost to overthrow our "heretical" government. I repeat: I am not justifying anything; I am not condoning any injustices committed. That was the situation, and I definitely believe that excesses were committed.... Be that as it may, however, it has been years since anyone was sentenced for political reasons in Albania.

[Bartoli] On the subject of Yugoslavia, it is on the verge of civil war, and Kosovo is at stake, too. What do you fear, and what are you prepared to do? Or what are you determined not to do?

[Alia] It is a worrisome situation. The threat of a civil war does exist, and it would harm not only Yugoslavia but the Balkans as a whole and, I would say, Europe. We in Albania certainly hope that it does not happen. Regarding Kosovo in particular, it is a very delicate issue, because it is indeed occupied by the Serbs. It is not a human rights issue; it is a matter of national rights—that is, something more than human rights. An entire population of 3 million is at stake. Albania's position in this connection is that Albanian people living in Yugoslavia must be granted the same rights as those enjoyed by the Yugoslav peoples. This is what we are asking—and nothing more; furthermore, we have no territorial ambitions.

[Bartoli] Yet the "nation," the homeland, has always been more important than anything else in Albania—more than the party, more than anything. "Albania is Albania's religion," was Enver Hoxha's moral testament. Albanians before Muslims, Albanians before Catholics, and even Albanians before Communists. For that matter, it is this religion of Albania that has dictated your entire foreign policy over the past 45 years....

[Alia] Correct. It is our fundamental characteristic, which few have understood. This national feeling of Albania's lies at the root of our split with Yugoslavia and the USSR. National interests.

[Bartoli] And of the split with China, too. With the protector whom you chose in accordance with Machiavelli's teaching, because it was the most distant. We have now reached the point where Albania's national interests require that the country turns toward Europe. Would love of the Albanian nation extend as far as the sacrifice of Marxist ideology to become Europeans?

[Alia] I would ask: Is Europe democratic or not? Does democracy accept Marxism or not? If it does accept it, why raise this issue? The Albanian opposition forces say that if the PPSh wins on 31 March, Europe will not help Albania, because it does not want to help Communists. So I repeat: Is Europe democratic?

[Bartoli] It would be possible to reply: Europe can help a Marxist country insofar as it guarantees freedom. If a country guarantees freedom, however, it does not describe itself as Marxist, but this is not the most important thing now. There is currently much concern about what might happen after 31 March. It is believed that if the PPSh wins there could be public disturbances, and that if the opposition forces win the PPSh could bring in the tanks. So, whoever wins, a threat of civil war is perceived. Does such a threat actually exist?

[Alia] I would rather answer thus: After the elections, whoever wins, the country needs a national unity government. There is no other solution.

[Bartoli] So if you do win, will you ask the opposition forces to govern with you?

[Alia] Yes.

[Bartoli] You—the regime's ideologist and Enver Hoxha's favorite pupil—are arguing in liberal terms. Are you sure that you are still a Marxist?

[Alia] Marxism, as I perceive it, means opposition exploitation, living off your own work, being appreciated for your own contribution to society: It means the people's happiness.

[Bartoli] It is high time Albania was happy. It does not seem to be so at all.

[Bartoli] No, it is not.

[Alia] I say this to Italy and Europe. Throughout their history the Albanian people have always needed friends. We consider friends all those who respect our freedom, our sovereignty, and our independence. We want good relations with all countries, especially with the European countries, headed by our neighbor, Italy. We have traditional ties between us, and even now Italy still shows that it respects Albania and its people. We depend on this cooperation. I extend the best possible wishes to the

Italian people. They are a people of workers.... Not workers in an ideological or rhetorical sense, but workers in the real sense.

Election Commission Head Gives News Conference

AU2703151091 Tirana ATA in English 0859 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Tirana, March 27 (ATA) — The chairman of the election central commission Prof. Dr. Rexhep Mejdani gave a press conference for Albanian and foreign reporters and press organs in the international press center in Tirana on March 26 afternoon.

After wishing welcome to foreign press representatives, Prof. Dr. Rexhep Mejdani dwelt in particular on the hitherto work of the election central commission, the election commissions of the precincts and voting booths. He underlined that, in spite of the pluralistic content of the election commissions, they are state ones and their members will be penally sentenced for any violation of the electoral law. He spoke also of the majority election system in our country, the secrecy of voting, the invitation that the Presidium of the People's Assembly has presented to delegations of foreign observers and reporters and underlined that representative observers of electoral subjects and independent candidates of foreign observers and press organs, radiotelevision, news agencies are allowed to attend the procedure of elections.

Responding to the questions, Prof. Dr. Rexhep Mejdani spoke of the composition and functioning of the election commission, the procedure of elections and the counting of votes, the election results, the reflection in the press and radiotelevision of the election campaign, etc. He explained also that the militarymen will vote in the voting centers in cities and villages and only a small part of them, because of being on duty, will vote in the voting centers in military units, where members of commission from political parties as well as representatives of candidates, press, foreign observers, etc., are allowed to be present.

Italian Ship Returns 374 Refugees

AU2703210791 Tirana ATA in English 1908 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Tirana, March 27 (ATA)—The Italian ferry boat "Espresso Venezia," by which returned 374 persons who had fled the country at the beginning of this month, arrived at the Durres sea port on March 26 evening. Among them were 16 children, 10-12 years old youngsters, parents with little children and others. They were from Durres, as well as from Lezhe, Shkoder, Kavaje, etc. During their travel the children were escorted by the health staff of the Italian Red Cross and at the sea port they were received by the chairman of the Durres Red Cross, Doctor Ali Sula. The children and the others were in good health. The district power organs in cooperation with the port's directorate had taken all the measures to carry them to their dwelling places by bus or train.

The number of the returnees over this month from Italy by ships and ferries amounts to about 4,000 people.

The Italian ferry "Espresso Venezia" left the Durres sea port on the same night.

Ministry Denies Rumors of Students' Gathering

AU2703210891 Tirana Domestic Service in Albanian 1900 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] The Education Ministry spokesman states that the continuation of classes in colleges, the opening of dormitories and canteens, and the voting on 31 March 1991 in the campus polling stations will take place in full accordance with the announcements issued earlier by the Education Ministry.

All rumors that were spread through some districts about the premature gathering of students in Tirana are denied and rejected.

The Education Ministry appeals to all students and parents and the whole public to distance themselves from rumors and not to fall victim to them.

[Signed] Education Ministry spokesman.

Hungary's Szokai Concludes Talks, Departs

AU2703210791 Tirana ATA in English 0905 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Tirana, March 27 (ATA)—The foreign vice minister of the PSR [People's Socialist Republic] of Albania, Sokrat Plaka, and the vice secretary of state for foreign affairs of Hungary, Imre Szokai, held consultations in Tirana from March 22-25 on bilateral relations and on many international problems of mutual interest.

During the consultations they concluded that democratic transformations in international relations and the integrating processes in Europe have created favourable conditions for the development of Albanian-Hungarian relations.

The parties underlined that broad possibilities existing for the increase of economic cooperation and the volume of goods exchanges. Both parties agreed to materialize the work for cooperation in the field of extracting and processing industry, agriculture, informatique, tourism,etc.

The parties agreed to examine the possible signing of an agreement on economic, industrial and technical-scientific cooperation and to immediately start the meetings of specialists in the above fields to concretely define the respective objects.

The parties consider useful to facilitate the transport of passengers and in this regard to see the possibility of expanding the existing agreement of road transport with the passengers' transport.

The parties agreed to start the work to reach an agreement on cultural cooperation.

During the consultations views were exchanged on the possibility of lifting visas for the diplomatic and service passports.

The parties upheld that their countries endorse the positive changes in the European continent, the creation of the unique structure of the European collective security, wishing to be its active participants. Both countries [word indistinct] to integrate in the system of European cooperation. At the same time they both are interested in taking part in the various regional initiatives and in this field they support each others' efforts.

During the consultations views were exchanged on the CSCE European processes and in this context on the importance of treating of the minority question .

The vice secretary of state for foreign affairs of Hungary, Imre Szokai, was received in separate meetings by the chairman of the Council of Ministers, Fatos Nano; the foreign minister, Muhamet Kapllani; and the minister of foreign trade and cooperation, Shane Korbeci.

Imre Szokai extended the invitation for a visit to Hungary to the foreign minister of the PSR of Albania, Muhamet Kapllani. He accepted the invitation with pleasure.

On March 26, the vice secretary of state for foreign affairs of Hungary, Imre Szokai, left our country.

Oil Research Accord Signed With Germany, Austria

AU2703210591 Tirana ATA in English 1905 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Tirana, March 27 (ATA)—The agreement between the Oil and Gas General Department and the firms "Deminex" (Germany) and OeMV (Austria) on the oil research and extraction in the Durres-Shengjin area, was signed in Tirana on March 27.

The agreement envisages the carrying out of the seismological geological studies, sinking of the wells, the preparation for production of the sources that might be discovered and the production of oil and gas from these sources. The expenditures for all the oil operations to be carried out in the sea will be met by the above mentioned firms on their own responsibility. These expenditures will be defrayed to the firms through the source itself if discovered, exploiting to this aim a part of the oil and gas, down to the complete defrayment. The greatest part of the production (about 55 per cent) during the period of defraying the expenditures and then the whole production will be shared between the parties. The agreement says that the Albanian share, that will include also the taxes of the Albanian state, will be somewhat larger than the fourfold of what the firms will get as a nett profit.

The contract includes also a complex of clauses of juridical, economic, technical and organisational character, which are in conformity with our existing legislation, as well as clauses on the amendments that might be made to the agreement with the issue of the new laws during the 25 years old period it will be in force.

This is the first most important contract reached so far with the foreign firms, due to the economic conditions it contains and the high level of the investments that amounts to some hundreds of millions of dollars, depending on the kind of the source to be made evident by the studies.

For the Albanian side, the agreement was signed by the director of the Oil, Gas and Processing Department at the Industry, Mining and Energy Ministry, Bejo Sejdini; for the German firm "Deminex" by Joachim Dietmann, and for the Austrian firm "OeMV" by Michael Neuhauser.

During the talk with the director Bejo Sejdini, the ATA correspondent learned that two other contracts are under way with the firm "Occidental Petroleum Company" and the firm "Chevron," both of the U.S.A. Likewise efforts are being made to prepare the agreement's principles with the Italian firm Agip.

BSP Issues Declaration on Responsibility

AU2703192191 Sofia Domestic Service in Bulgarian 1830 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] A political declaration of the Supreme Council of the Bulgarian Socialist Party [BSP] and the All-Party Control Commission has been issued for publication.

The BSP addresses its supporters and electors and states that it condemns and rejects the errors and violations committed, but not the socialist ideas and values [words indistinct] humane society. Cleansed of the distortions, the socialist values become even more vital and necessary, the document states.

We recognize the grievous consequences of the crisis, and accept our responsibility for this. It is also necessary, however, for the other political forces to assume their own responsibility for the exacerbation and worsening of the crisis during the final months of 1990.

The opponents of the socialist ideas are attacking the party with increasing aggression and condemning it as being guilty for the country's national crisis. The real phenomenon of the crisis is replaced by the deliberately exaggerated concept of catastrophe. This is done with the design, [word indistinct] in its nature and antidemocratic in its essence, of eliminating the BSP by forceful means from the country's political life.

This approach is dangerous not only for the BSP, but also for democratization and civil peace in Bulgaria. The supporters of this approach have set themselves the aim not of settling the issue of the BSP's political responsibility, but of liquidating the BSP politically, the document states.

The BSP, like any political party, can only have one judge, namely the people, and only one public court, namely free and democratic elections.

As far as the issue of personal political responsibility is concerned, the party has sought out and rid itself of a considerable number of discredited political figures at various levels. Regarding the specific juridical guilt of those party and state leaders who committed crimes against the laws of the state, they will have to answer to the judicial authorities, the political declaration of the BSP Supreme Council and the All-Party Control Council.

According to a spokesman of the BSP Press Center, the political declaration will be followed by an appendix, which will be disseminated on 29 March and will list the names of the leaders who bear political responsibility and the guilt for the country's grave political and socioeconomic crisis.

Political Guilt Issues Viewed

AU2703212091 Sofia BTA in English 2037 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Sofia, March 27 (BTA)—The Supreme Council of the Bulgarian Socialist (ex-Communist) Party [BSP] and the Party Auditing Commission today released a declaration on the party's political responsibility and the chief culprits for the blunders and abuses which led to the crisis in society in recent years. According to a BSP spokesman, a forthcoming supplement to the declaration will identify the leaders who bear political responsibility.

The BSP declaration extends sympathy and apology to all Communists, members of other political parties and nonparty people who suffered unlawful and unfair physical, moral and professional harassment under totalitarianism.

The BSP Supreme Council "does not claim that this is a comprehensive and exhaustive assessment of the matters raised." This would require viewing the period from the distance of history. Now it is only possible to make a political assessment. The declaration states that history and practice are the two highest authorities which will reveal and verify the whole truth about the party's political responsibility and the specific guilt of its leaders for the present crisis in society.

As to personal political responsibility, the party has expelled a considerable number of discredited political figures at various levels. As to specific legal liability, the party and state leaders who have violated the law of the land should be brought to justice.

The declaration points out that political responsibility and guilt cannot be confined to several people, however great their guilt may be. The party's collective bodies, such as the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee, as well as the leaderships of other party bodies, the former government, State Council, parliament, and the top apparat played an important part in decision making and in the actual exercise of power.

Yet the individual members of these bodies and echelons of political power are not equally responsible. Some of them openly resisted Todor Zhivkov's autocratic regime and were punished, persecuted and repressed, there were also people who did not shirk responsibility, worked honestly and abided by the law and the morals, who disagreed with the autocratic regime but kept a low profile, still others were careerists, hypocrites and time-servers.

The Bulgarian Socialist Party accepts its responsibility for the grave mistakes and setbacks in the economic policy prior to November 10, 1989, which led to the present acute economic crisis in this country. The declaration points out that the top echelon of party and state leaders bears the greatest share of responsibility. The BSP categorically rejects the attempts to assess the whole post-September 9, 1944 period as a crisis.

In the ideological sphere, the most serious abuses are connected with the establishment of Marxism-Leninism as the monopoly ideology and of dogmatism in theory and in the treatment of Marxism.

Addressing its supporters and constituents, the BSP states that it condemns and rejects the actual mistakes and abuses rather than the Socialist ideas and values which are indispensable to a humane society.

The BSP finds the roots of the crisis in the Stalin-style political system imposed and accepted in Bulgaria. The formulations on the dictatorship of the proletariat, democratic centralism, the absolutization of class struggle, the party's ideological and political monopoly, the total state-control and centralization of economic management underlie the grave abuses of the socialist idea. The declaration states that these formulations are incompatible with democracy under the new conditions.

Opponents to socialist ideas are growing ever more aggressive in their attacks and accusations of the party as the culprit for this country's "national catastrophe." According to the declaration, they replace the actual "crisis" by the deliberately exaggerated concept of "catastrophe." The BSP sees this as an antidemocratic design to oust the party by force from Bulgaria's political scene.

The declaration emphasizes the party's credit for the beginning of the transition from a totalitarian to a democratic society on November 10, 1989.

In conclusion the BSP calls for making political violence in Bulgaria a thing of the past.

BSP Greets BSDP on Upcoming Congress

AU2703154791 Sofia DUMA in Bulgarian 23 Mar 91 p 1

[Text] The following greeting message from the Bulgarian Socialist Party [BSP] to the delegates and guests of the 38th Bulgarian Social Democratic Party [BSDP] Congress, which is opening in Sofia today, was submitted to our editorial board: Please accept sincere wishes and greetings on behalf of the BSP for useful and successful work by your upcoming congress.

We are confident that the decisions that your congress is expected to adopt will further enhance the constructive role of the BSDP as one of the most influential political parties in our country in consolidating and promoting the peaceful transition from a totalitarian to a democratic society.

As an important factor in the international movement for democratic socialism and a member of the Socialist International, the BSDP is capable of contributing even more to changing Bulgaria's image in democratic society in Europe and worldwide.

Relations between the BSP and the BSDP have their own history, which are subject to our critical assessment, but they also have a present and future. The traditional and everlasting values of the socialist movement, such as freedom, justice, and solidarity, bring us closer together. We are convinced that the differences beween us should not represent an obstacle in our mutual dialogue and cooperation to Bulgaria's benefit.

We wish you a successful congress, the greeting message ends.

BSP Leaders Attend Sofia Spring Rally

AU2703155491 Sofia DUMA in Bulgarian 23 Mar 91 pp 1, 2

[Nadya Georgieva and Dora Chichkova report: "Socialists Welcomed the Bulgarian Socialist Party's Spring Centennial With a Festive Rally]

[Excerpt] Yesterday, Socialists and Bulgarian Socialist Party [BSP] supporters celebrated the party's 100th spring anniversary with a festive rally on Sofia's 9 September Square.

BSP leaders and numerous National Assembly deputies from the Socialist Party joined thousands of participants in the rally who came to greet the beginning of spring and hope. [passage omitted]

BSP Chairman Aleksandur Lilov addressed the participants in the rally with the following statement: I wish you confidence in our bright ideals—freedom, democracy, justice, and solidarity. They are immortal values in Bulgaria and all over the world. He wished the participants in the rally and their families happiness and health, but also courage in this difficult spring "so we may struggle to overcome the current difficulties and the crisis, and win the elections."

Andrey Lukanov stated: We have gathered here not with the intention of overthrowing the assembly, or obstructing democracy, we do not threaten anyone with confrontation or hatred. We are here to confirm that our party is based on humanitarian principles, that it is a party of the people and for the people. We are here to express and confirm our good will and our intention of working together for Bulgaria's prosperity. He called on the Socialists, urging them to be strong and confident in facing "the new legislative elections, which others are trying to frighten us with." The BSP is not afraid of anyone and least of all of its own people, Lukanov stated at the end of his address.

Nora Ananieva, leader of the BSP legislative faction, assured the audience that nearly all the BSP members are attending the rally.

Aleksandur Tomov recalled that a year ago, in March 1991, we were told that our party would not survive the next few months. Nevertheless, half a million people

decided to renew their BSP membership in the meantime, not because we are powerful, but because it is a question of manly courage, sincere loyalty, and profound faith, Tomov added.

Dimitur Yonchev pointed out that some sensible and decent people who care about Bulgaria's well-being exist within the opposition and among those who are not involved in politics. Let us cooperate with them, let us work together for the sake of our beloved motherland, the speaker said. [passage omitted]

BSP Nomenklatura Influence on Army Analyzed

AU2803100091 Sofia DEMOKRATSIYA in Bulgarian 22 Mar 91 p 5

[Article by Lieutenant Colonel Veselin Krusharski: "The Marshal's Baton Does Not Lie Idle in the Pack"]

[Excerpts] General Dzhurov, one of the self-styled heroes of the 10 November 1989 events, modestly described his contribution to the removal of Todor Zhivkov, general secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party [BCP] Central Committee (although the rumors about his preparatory work in this respect made it seem much more grand), but he did not miss any opportunity to appear at election rallies in full uniform and make speeches in support of his party. The issue is not so much the content of the speeches, or the general's entourage, but the persistently asking of the questions: At whose side is the Army at this moment; whose interests does it serves; and to whose power is this organized force subject today? Numerous people until recently regarded the Army as a reliable guarantor and a stabilizing factor for the country's long-awaited democratization. The more so, because the necessity of dealing with problems related to the maintenance of public order did not emerge over the period in question.

The Bulgarian National Day, 3 March, which until recently was exploited by the Communist leadership for its own purposes, has fortunately again become our universally recognized national day that rallied the hearts and minds of millions of Bulgarians around the monument of the Russian Tsar Aleksandr, our liberator. On the same evening on which elite units of the Bulgarian Army presented arms at the monument of the heroes who perished for Bulgaria's liberation, the presence of Andrey Lukanov sitting next to Defense Minister General Mutafchiev was rather significant. What did his presence express? What did it demonstrate? Was it simply meant to express the gratitude of the Bulgarian Socialist Party [BSP] to the liberators?! Let us hope that it should be so.

In my opinion, however, Lukanov's presence was no coincidence; it was intentional. It served to show everybody: Be careful and see for yourself once and for all whom the Army is siding with and whom it is still serving—party and military leadership being on the same wavelength. Do not delude yourselves that something has changed.

Lieutenant General Ivan Stefanov, spokesman of the Ministry of Defense and lecturer on scientific communism, who until recently was first deputy chief of the Army's Main Political Administration, provided a simple explanation for the most gullible people. He said that the replacement of red military banners would be too expensive. [passage omitted]

If financial difficulties are involved, however, would it not be better for the Ministry of Defense to examine its expenditures? Is it not high time to reduce the number of generals to the necessary 15-20 people as they existed in the pre-war period? Are all those, who have such high-ranking posts in the Army, real professionals? To what extent are the payrolls of such highranking officers justified? Does the example of the Persian Gulf war not suggest some reevaluations concerning the reliability and necessity of an entire branch of troops? Is the existence of such large staffs and administrative units absolutely required? Would it not be expedient to reduce the Infantry Command, which is excessively inflated, to a normal size and to integrate it in the Ministry of Defense as a normal department? [passage omitted]

A highranking military commander told me that such drastic reductions in the Army are inadmissible. There might be some logical explanation for his statement. Nevertheless, how should we understand the drastic replacement of all command cadres from the corps and division upward (with the exception of the defense minister) which was accomplished in the Greek Army several weeks ago? Is this Army perhaps not concerned about the country's combat readiness? [passage omitted]

Under the new international conditions, a country's security is no longer guaranteed by arms rattling, but by a sensible domestic and foreign policy. This was confirmed by the most recent events in our country. If the Army should be really freed of the BSP's (BCP) guardianship, our country's democratization would be the first to benefit from it, while the Army would increasingly earn the common people's confidence and affection.

BSP Views Petitions on Party Membership

AU2703125991 Sofia DUMA in Bulgarian 25 Mar 91 p 2

[Darina Radeva report]

[Text] On 24 March the members of the All-Party Control Commission reviewed six requests for restoring party membership, continuous service, and political rehabilitation. The requests were granted a positive reply, which is customary in the commission's practice.

The Municipal Control Commission of the Bulgarian Socialist Party [BSP] in Burgas has proposed to the All-Party Commission to expel Nikolay Zhishev from the BSP. Nikolay Zhishev was first secretary of the BSP Burgas Oblast and Okrug Committees for 20 years, however, at present he is not a member of the BSP Burgas municipal organization. At the meeting Nikolay

Zhishev assumed political responsibility for what took place in Burgas and the okrug in the last 20 years, including the acute social problems and the situation in the party organization, but rejected the specific accusations of deriving personal advantages from his positions, and so forth. The All-Party Commission postponed the review on Nikolay Zhishev's case to hear the arguments of the Burgas commission and compare the main points.

Todorov Accused of Being 'Revival' Supporter

AU2703114891 Sofia DEMOKRATSIYA in Bulgarian 29 Mar 91 p 1

[Bozhidar Kunchev article: "The Chairman of the Grand National Assembly Was Also One of The 'National Revival' Champions"]

[Text] I remember very well the "spontaneous" processions of so-called Sofia citizens. I remember their slogans and shouts in front of the Turkish Embassy's building. I will never forget the evenings when I listened to Western radio stations to learn more about the armed clashes and the bloodshed, the violence, and all the other events that the party used to call the "national revival process" and which the democratic world community denounced as one of the greatest crimes of our century.

I was convinced at that time that Zhivkov and his party would one day pay for shedding innocent blood, that they would pay for making us ashamed even today. I was not aware and could not know anything about the "scholars" and "learned minds" behind the scenes who were in charge of providing the arguments in support of the monstrous idea of forced assimilation.

If a trial should take place over this crime, our public might learn a great deal about its perpetrators. As is appropriate for a rule-of-law state (and is it not our ambition to be such a state?) the culprits will get what they deserve. I definitely think that Nikolay Todorov, who has a certain fame, should also get what he deserves considering that....

...considering that if you open the July 1989 issue of the ATLANTIC Journal, you will find an article from a series entitled "The European Third World" by Robert D. Keypul. The author of the series writes in a certain passage as follows: "When I last visited Bulgaria, toward the end of 1986, Nikolay Todorov, deputy chairman of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, told me the following: 'The state must defend the interests of the nation, and here in the Balkans a nation means a certain ethnic group.' He went on: 'The maintenance of peace in the region means that every minority should be fully assimilated by the majority. It may be regretful, but it is a fact.'"

There is no point in commenting about Todorov's statement. It truthfully reflects the very essence of a certain scientific and political mentality on the account of which his party finally promoted him to the post of Grand National Assembly chairman. Nevertheless, I would like to ask, and I would like to ask the academician himself, in particular, how he feels today, when he has to give the floor to people who were subject to assimilation for the sake of "peace in the region"....

Well, ideas are also subject to evolution and we do not doubt that Todorov, prompted by the change in circumstances, would make a thoroughly different statement for the Atlantic journal today. His past statement is so immoral, so shocking, that despite his ideological "evolution," he is not only unworthy of the post of National Assembly chairman, but does not even deserve to be a simple member of the assembly. This is my opinion, at least, otherwise it would not be worthwhile saying that mistakes and crimes against humanity are not subject to amnesty and should not be forgotten.

There is something more to be said on this subject. As chairman of our legislature, Todorov receives foreign delegations and pays visits to foreign countries, precisely to countries that read the Atlantic journal carefully. What will those people abroad think about us if democratic and legislative Bulgaria is represented by people such as the aforementioned academician?

Interests Commission on Updating Social Pact

AU2703211491 Sofia Domestic Service in Bulgarian 2030 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] The agreement between the government, trade unions, and employers on preserving social peace needs updating and further specification as Bulgaria moves into the second stage of the country's economic reform. This joint conclusion was reached by the participants in a session of the Tripartite Commission on Coordinating Interests held in Sofia today.

On behalf of the government, [Finance] Minister Ivan Kostov gave a positive appraisal of the cooperation to date between the economic leaders and the trade unions, who have supported the reform. He voiced the government's desire for further constructive actions by the three parties.

According to Professor Krustyu Petkov, chairman of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria, the first stage of the reform has not yet been completed, and a number of points in the agreement have not been fulfilled. The indexation payments for December and January have not been paid, and the compensation payments for March are likely to be received during April at the earliest. Mr. Petkov warned of the danger of the onset of two waves, namely inflation and unemployment, and called upon the government to work out a national economic strategy.

The viewpoint of the Podkrepa Labor Confederation is that the main part of the agreement has not been observed, and that the real reduction in living standards exceeds the preliminary forecasts. In Podkrepa's view,

the greatest fall in the standard of living of the ordinary Bulgarian is expected at the end of April and beginning of May.

There is a lack of tripartite commissions in the industrial ministries, and the representatives of Podkrepa insisted on the setting up of such commissions.

The Podkrepa Labor Confederation will continue to observe the agreement if the fundamental provisions contained in it are fulfilled.

According to the economic leaders, the moment has come to renew the economy as a whole; this should be reflected in the updated document of the agreement.

Paparizov Interview on Foreign Trade

AU2803111291 Sofia DUMA in Bulgarian 25 Mar 91 pp 1, 2

[Interview with Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Atanas Paparizov by Petur Gornenski; place and date not given—"Confidence in Bulgaria as an Economic Partner Begins To Return"]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] [Gornenski] What is the role of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations in effecting stabilization and overcoming the economic crisis?

[Paparizov] First of all, our task is to ensure maximum beneficial conditions, on both a bilateral and multilateral basis—for making Bulgarian companies capable of competing in other countries' markets. Our companies should be treated precisely as the companies of any other state are treated. The second task is to construct within the country a foreign trade regime that will be fully based on objective rules and criteria, and in which as few decisions as possible should be made, which will improve efficiency. This regime must be extremely clear and accessible to all companies. The decree that was adopted in this area was an important step forward. Instead of export quotas and quantitative restrictions on exports and imports, we introduced economic instruments aimed at achieving two basic goals: On the one hand, our domestic consumer market must not be impoverished. On the other, we must not prevent the companies that could appear in the foreign market from making a profit, and thus restoring confidence in our country as an economic partner. I must add that, after a certain period during which the companies wanted to resolve everything by themselves, they have now started to come often to us for advice or to inform us about cases in which they request specific cooperation both at the intergovernmental level and within the government. [passage omitted]

[Gornenski] Could you clarify the situation with our foreign trade?

[Paparizov] There is a decrease in our foreign trade, which is a result of several factors: First of all, our trade with the East European countries has sharply decreased. The payments with those countries are conducted now in foreign currency. At present our companies and their partners do not have a sufficient amount of foreign currency to allow them to maintain the flow of trade by clearing payments. In addition, there is also the matter of our insufficient exports to the USSR, which is the only country with which we trade on the basis of clearing payments—in exchange of power supply and raw materials. There is also a great decrease in our trade with the developed countries with a market economy. The reason is twofold: On the one hand, after the moratorium on payments announced by the Bulgarian National Bank at the beginning of 1990, the credit lines and investment credit lines were effectively discontinued. On the other hand, at the moment our companies have decreased their production not only for the domestic market, but also for export. Apparently, they have not adapted yet to production under the new economic conditions. [passage omitted]

[Gornenski] How would you describe our economic relations with our basic partners?

[Paparizov] We must create conditions of implementing exports and imports with the USSR on the basis of the signed agreements on mutual deliveries, monitored and encouraged by the two countries' governments. This is the so-called centralized trade exchange based on specific lists—one of them includes oil, and the other, the other important raw materials, such as electric power, coal, ferrous metals, and spare parts. In addition to implementing those agreements we also must encourage our companies to expand direct relations with Soviet companies. The main factor in our relations with the developed Western countries is the fact that at this stage they have adopted a decision to support our government's economic program. As a result of this, conditions were created for financing and creating a more normal foreign currency reserve in our country. Conditions were created for renewing contacts at the company level to implement cooperative projects and joint activities, a practice that was frozen or discontinued in the last year. [passage omitted]

Provisions of New Income Tax Law Detailed

AU2703203091 Sofia DUMA in Bulgarian 23 Mar 91 pp 1, 2

[Dimitrana Aleksandrova report]

[Text] If your monthly remuneration for April under a labor agreement is 21,000 leva, a general income tax of 7,206 leva will be deducted. If you receive a gross amount of 460 leva, the state will take only 2 leva from you as tax. These are the arithmetic consequences of the Law on Amendments and Addenda to the General Income Tax Law, which was adopted by the legislature on Thursday 21 March.

The deputies decided that it was high time to establish a steep and progressively rising scale for the most universal tax. Until now, monthly wages of 600 and 6,000 leva were both subject to a 14 percent rate of income tax, so the amount collected in tax increased only as a proportion of a higher gross income.

The "fat" pay packets are hit the hardest. The income tax on a monthly salary of 15,000 leva is 4,906 leva; the tax on a monthly salary of 8,000 leva is 2,286 leva; on 5,000 leva—1,246 leva; on 3,000—646 leva; and on 2,000—366 leva.

A monthly salary of 1,000 leva is the level at which the amount of tax is the same under the previous and the new regulations.

During April, 126 leva will have to be paid in income tax on labor earnings of 1,000 leva. The tax on the same earnings in March is 129 leva.

The income tax on monthly wages of 800 leva is now 78 leva, whereas previously it was 101 leva. The new tax on wages of 600 leva is 30 leva, 43 leva less than the previous amount.

Monthly wages of 500 leva are now subject to 10 leva in tax, instead of 59 leva.

Previously, the earnings ceiling on which no tax was levied was 165 leva. Now, earnings up to 450 leva a month are free of tax.

If you can remember your school math, it is not complicated to calculate the amount you will pay each month in general income tax on your wages or salary under a labor law agreement:

Monthly Earnings Band leva	Amount of tax
450.01 to 600:	20 percent of amount over 450
600.01 to 2,000:	30 leva + 24 percent of amount over 600
2,000.01 to 4,000:	366 leva + 28 percent of amount over 2,000
4,000.01 to 6,000:	926 leva + 32 percent of amount over 4,000
6,000.01 to 10,000:	1,566 leva + 36 percent of amount over 6,000
10,000.01 to 20,000:	3,006 leva + 38 percent of amount over 10,000
Over 20,000:	6,806 leva + 40 percent of amount over 20,000

National Bank To Permit Private Money Changers

AU2703193091 Sofia BTA in English 1812 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Sofia, March 27 (BTA)—The Board of Directors of the National Bank of Bulgaria will adopt regulations allowing private persons to trade in foreign currency, a senior bank official told the BTA.

The official said that the document will restore the money changers' profession, entitling them to obtain a licence for transactions in foreign currency and other instruments of payment against Bulgarian leva. Until now the money changers' business was banned in Bulgaria under the Transactions in Foreign-Currency Assets Act. The ban will be lifted on Tuesday when the regulations will be published in the Official Gazette.

Soviet Nuclear Experts' Departure Regretted

AU2703211091 Sofia OTECHESTVEN VESTNIK in Bulgarian 22 Mar 91 p 1

[Tsvetan Radoev article: "A Commemorative Photograph"]

[Text] The recent news item was almost offensively laconic. It read as follows: "The last Soviet experts left for home. They were released from the work contract that they signed regarding their participation in bringing on line and exploiting the sixth reactor of the Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant...."

The events I would like to recall today are relatively recent, so we cannot have forgotten them: Do you remember the first excavation on the building site on which the "nuclear heart of our socialist motherland" would soon start beating? Do you remember the Bulgarian and Russian workers' heroic exploits of labor under the burning sun of Mysia and the cold winds of the Danube valley? Do you remember the photographs of the men in their quilted jackets? Should these pictures remain the only mementos? Do you remember the ceremonies on the occasion of commissioning the first reactors?

We must be sworn nihilists (and in fact we almost are) to deny the generous assistance of the Soviet experts without whom nuclear power would be nonexistent in our country.

As far as the quality of the nuclear power plant in our country is concerned, this is another question that should be discussed as soon as we begin to assess the quality of Soviet nuclear power plants and compare them to Western plants. I am convinced that we will do so with delay, as usual....

Our children are reading as follows in their school books: "Look here! Ships and trains coming from the fraternal Soviet land are daily carrying raw materials, equipment, and all sorts of goods for our country. Our country's prosperity is growing every day!" In talking to Soviet economists in Moscow, however, Mikhail Gorbachev said: "Look at the East European countries....They knock ever more insistently at our door. We should not turn our backs on our neighbors, especially considering

that we spent so many years together, that we coordinated our economies with each other. Nevertheless, our relations should be established on a new basis."

A new basis? What now?

Only a few subscribers of Soviet newspapers exist in Bulgaria today because subscriptions have to be paid in dollars....

The $4,000 in monthly wages requested by the Soviet specialists in Kozloduy are a very large amount indeed, a hundred times more than our workers' wages. Nevertheless, why did we not manage to train our own specialists throughout the years, so that we have only 25, instead of 50 native experts today? I would not like to question their qualifications, but the Chernobyl "spring" still hangs around in our meadows and pastures, in spite of everything....

Nevertheless, we are not talking about this event, let us hope that nothing of the sort will never happen!

Such a manner of parting with people to whom we are linked by long-standing cooperation, is by no means in the style of Bulgarian traditions. It is not the Bulgarians' way to reward such people with medals only. It is not part of our people's tradition to behave like angry children because of some green dollar bills, even if they have numerous zeroes....

Even the most beautiful speeches of gratitude are not worth a penny if we forget for the sake of dollars that we shared our bread with those Russian boys, that we celebrated our holidays together that we exchanged Bulgarian and Russian style-drinking toasts with them, that our girls married some of them, and that children who have two mother tongues were born.

Ethnic Unrest Flares Again in Razgrad

AU2803094591 Sofia VECHERNI NOVINI in Bulgarian 22 Mar 91 p 1

[Dulinko Dulev report from Razgrad on 21 March: "The Banner is Waving Again"]

[Text]—Let us hope that my forecasts are wrong, but the atmosphere in Razgrad is far from pleasant. Evidently, someone is interested in fanning unrest. The patriotic Bulgarians from the Fatherland Front Party of Labor interrupted their hunger strikes in protest against the introduction of Turkish language lessons in Bulgarian schools, but they were replaced by National Radical Party members disrupting traffic...and barely escaping the wrath of normal Bulgarian citizens who were ready to beat them up, before they packed up and disappeared. Now they are followed by the members of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms [DPS] who have just appeared on the scene. Give us back our apartments, which we sold to you when we left on our holiday trip to Turkey, they are shouting. They are right in some respects. Next to their tents, however, stand starving, barefoot and naked people who are homeless and angry, and have been swept up by the anti-Turkish wave. It is not quite certain who will be the first to ignite the spark of mutual hatred in that city. It is, however, known that an assassination attempt was committed in the house of Filip Asenov Emilov from Belovets. In the middle of the night a homemade bomb was thrown in his bedroom, failing to kill him and his wife, but killing the hope that things in the Ludogorie region would be peaceful and quiet, unlike in Kurdzhali. The political forces in the Razgrad area have distanced themselves from this turmoil. Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the fact that Filip Emilov has really decided to move out in the future, unlike his night assailants, who do not agree with him.... The militia forces are dealing with the question. Khasanov, one of the local DPS leaders, assures us that his movement does not intend further to complicate the already difficult situation in Razgrad. Evidently, the protesters on strike, who are once more waving the Bulgarian national flag in the city center and who do not let us catch our breath in peace, have not asked him for his opinion.

'Albanian Bulgarians' Cross Into Yugoslavia

AU2703114491 Sofia DUMA in Bulgarian 25 Mar 91 p 1

[Goran Gotev report: "One Thousand Albanian Bulgarians Emigrate to Yugoslavia"]

[Text] Belgrade, 24 March—Yesterday almost 1,000 Albanians, who had crossed the border and entered the Yugoslav territory near Debar, were returned to Albania. Today, about 1,000 Albanian citizens of Bulgarian origin again crossed the border in the Prespa Lake region, near Rosen in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Yesterday, the Albanian border guards opened fire against the refugees. According to an Albanian mathematics student in Shkoder, one of the refugee was killed and another severely wounded. Today the Albanian border guards did not open fire against those who crossed the border and entered the Yugoslav territory. Apparently, in the future Yugoslavia will return the Albanians and will admit only refugees of Slavonic ethnic origin.

NAA Official Visits Federal Assembly

LD2703185391 Prague CTK in English 1554 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Prague March 27 (CTK)—The future of European security was the main topic in meetings today as president of the North Atlantic Assembly (NAA) Charlie Rose visited the Czechoslovak Parliament, including its Foreign and Defence and Security Committees, and Foreign Affairs Minister Jiri Dienstbier on an official visit by an NAA delegation.

Accompanied by Secretary-General Peter Corterier and other members of NATO's inter-parliamentary assembly, Rose was met here this morning by the chairperson of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly (Parliament), Alexander Dubcek.

Dubcek informed the visitors about the current situation in Czechoslovakia, reviewing his country's position vis-a-vis both the Warsaw Pact and NATO and noting the effects of the democratisation process in the former East Bloc. He pointed out the importance of the Soviet Union's participation in both the integration of Europe and the world as a whole.

Responding to Dubcek's comment that Czechoslovakia hopes to play a progressive role in these processes, Rose said that he was convinced that associate membership in the NAA would form the basis for successful collaboration between the Assembly and Czechoslovakia. NAA's offer for associate was appreciated by Czechoslovakia.

In discussions with the Parliamentary committees, both sides agreed that as the advisory body to the North Atlantic military alliance, the NAA is very important for the consolidation of democracy in Central Europe. President Vaclav Havel's speech last week at NATO headquarters in Brussels was highly praised by the NAA representatives, who explained that NATO's current strategy is to guarantee the defence of the West without threatening the East. In other words, their strategy is designed to be defensive with respect to the Soviet Union.

Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier told CTK that his meeting with the NAA delegation dealt mainly with the issue of European security. Both sides agreed on the necessity of creating a security system that protected all countries while not isolating the USSR—an essential component of all-European security, according to the minister.

The NAA representatives were also curious about the possible effects of events in Yugoslavia and the danger of an explosion of nationalism in Eastern Europe in general. Dienstbier responded by noting the problem of economic conversion of the Slovak arms industry, saying that in combination with nationalism it could lead to the strengthening of extremist and nationalist tendencies. Rather than merely requesting Czechoslovakia not to sell arms to certain regions, the minister stated, the West should provide concrete assistance for economic conversion.

The North Atlantic Assembly delegates were also informed on the progress of the ratification of agreements on maximum levels of conventional weapons between Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and the Soviet Union. While the Czechoslovak parliament has already approved the agreement, President Havel will not sign it until all of the parties agree to adhere unconditionally.

Dienstbier mentioned his country's efforts to conclude new bilateral agreements with Germany, the USSR, Poland and Hungary, intended to serve as a component of the new European security system.

Assembly Asked To Approve EBRD Agreement

LD2703191691 Prague CTK in English 1455 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Prague March 27 (CTK)—The Czechoslovak Federal Assembly adjourned its session this afternoon until tomorrow morning when it will be asked by the government to approve the agreement on the establishment of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The bank, founded by 42 countries and organizations in Paris in May 1990, is to start work on April 15. Its total capital is 10 million ECUs [European currency units]. The parliament will also start discussion tomorrow on a controversial law on the ownership of land and other agricultural property.

The report on the economy which was presented by Federal Premier Marian Calfa today will not be debated until the next, 15th session of parliament. Its date has not been set yet. This afternoon the deputies will receive the report in writing and discussions in the committees will follow.

The parliament passed today amendments to the October 1990 legislation known as the small restitution law under which institutions of public interest, such as health, social, cultural and educational facilities, which are exempt from return to their former owners under the restitution law, will be compulsorily leased on a ten-year contract.

Minister Dlouhy Reports on Visit to United States

AU2703162491 Prague CTK in English 1342 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Text] Washington March 23 (CTK correspondent)—The World Bank has agreed to provide a loan of up to 500 million dollars to Czechoslovakia for energy projects next year, Czechoslovak Economics Minister Vladimir Dlouhy told CTK after his two-day talks here.

He said that the money is to be used especially for desulfurization projects for power plants in ecologically affected North Bohemia, for energy transmission, construction of gas storage facilities and other programs.

Dlouhy also informed officials of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of the economic and political situation, the progress of reform and the changes being made

in agreement with the IMF which has provided Czechoslovakia with a loan of 1,500 million dollars for its economic transformation.

Dlouhy said he held talks with Robert Zoellick, adviser to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. He told him that next week the Czechoslovak Government would decide on the use of a 60-million-dollar enterprise fund to be made available to Czechoslovakia over the next few years. The establishment of the fund was announced by President George Bush during his visit to Prague last November 17. All conditions for the functioning of the fund have been created in Czechoslovakia and from April the government would begin assessing applications for money from the fund from private entrepreneurs, Dlouhy said.

During his two-day visit Dlouhy attended a conference on energy investment in Eastern Europe at Georgetown University and "although investors are still very cautious towards Eastern Europe, really considerable and interesting possibilities may be in the offing in the energy industry", he said. Dlouhy left for Paris.

Dienstbier Interviewed on International Politics

AU2703160091 Bratislava NARODNA OBRODA in Slovak 18 Mar 91 p 6

[Interview with CSFR Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier by Juraj Veres and Ivan Horsky; place and date not given: "Willingness To Hold a Dialogue—A Prerequisite For Success"—first paragraph is NARODNA OBRODA introduction]

[Text] Prague—Jiri Dienstbier, CSFR deputy prime minister and foreign minister, granted an extensive interview to NARODNA OBRODA, a part of which we carried on Friday [15 March] in reaction to the present development in Slovakia. In the second part, Jiri Dienstbier answers questions related to some further aspects of Czech-Slovak relations, and he explains selected problems of current international politics as they relate to our country.

[NARODNA OBRODA] When Czech Prime Minister Petr Pithart traveled to Moscow, it provoked no reaction in Prague, but when [Slovak] Prime Minister Meciar was preparing his trip, all of a sudden some circles saw in it other than economic and social problems. They perceived it as some sort of rapprochement between Slovakia and the Soviet Union....

[Dienstbier] As far as I know, such views come from Bratislava. I have no information that Slovakia would orient itself toward the USSR. It would mean speculating on whether it is true or whether it is possible that a part of Slovak political representatives, that is, those who studied in Moscow or who have acquaintances there, are resuming old contacts there. I answered that I did not know anything about it and that I did not like talk about such conspiracies. Conspirators will achieve nothing if there is not the right atmosphere for it in society. This would be the same as if Bolsheviks were to accuse the opposition of being controlled by the CIA or, the other way around, it would be equal to saying, as the rumors have it, that the 17 November events were prepared by the KGB or even directly by Shevardnadze.... This is nonsense. Even if there existed such a tendency, it could not create such a situation. I do not see anything abnormal in Prime Minister Meciar's trip to Moscow; it is OK. I have only one objection, the same as I raised when I spoke about his trip to Italy [in the first installment of the interview]. Pertaining to his trip to Italy—they could have announced it sooner....

[NARODNA OBRODA] Mr. Dienstbier, do you have the impression that we underestimate our relations with the USSR? A reversal in the USSR, which would have an impact on the whole of Central Europe, of course....

[Dienstbier] I believe that a return to totalitarianism, let alone to ideological totalitarianism, is not possible, not only because the events have gone too far during the past five or six years. Indeed, Gorbachev appeared because it was impossible to rule in the old manner even then. The fact that a solution or an alternative to the old system has not yet been successfully found does not mean that the old system can come back. The old system has exhausted all its possibilities. If the decay advances even further, a dictatorship could be instituted—a military one or some other—yet it would not be a totalitarian dictatorship. It would be a pure dictatorship unsupported by a holy idea, a dictatorship in the form of keeping order, maintaining the system, and securing supplies—it would be a pure pragmatism. A pragmatic dictatorship will be busy with solving basic domestic problems and ensuring the operation of its territory, and it can in no event be expected to plunge into some great international adventures, which would only make its position worse. In the long run anything can happen, fanatical nationalism could win, and there could be some threat coming from the South if a great power started to come into being in the Middle East, devouring its neighbors—like Saddam Husayn's experiment. We must be prepared for all possible alternatives, yet this does not mean that they must come to pass.

I believe that the most natural development in the USSR will be as follows: The power structure will be reinforced and efforts will be made—even by forcible means—to retain a functioning state while pursuing present political goals. The democratization of society and a gradual transition toward a market economy simply do not work, and neither does the liberalization of the federation. These goals will be retained. It will take much longer than previously anticipated.

[NARODNA OBRODA] Do you believe that the West has done everything it could to strengthen the tendencies toward democratization and liberalization, in the sense of President Bush's words that we must give support to Gorbachev and, thereby, to our cause?

[Dienstbier] It is a great problem how to do this specifically without overstepping limits on either side, that is, how to avoid a situation whereby, under the pretext of

supporting democratic forces, we would, in fact, help retain or establish an authoritarian regime. On the other hand, we must also avoid the danger of pushing the country into isolation by means of great gestures by which we might give support to conservative forces and unintentionally punish democratic forces and render their functioning impossible. For example, the Baltic republics—some people demand that diplomatic ties be established with them. But it is only possible to declare the establishment of diplomatic ties, it is not possible to put them into practice, because such an office cannot be opened without Moscow's approval. Even if we made such a gesture and formally declared the establishment of diplomatic relations, it could happen that all ties would be severed. Those nations need to be drawn into Europe, they need to be in permanent contact, they need people to travel there, they need the rules of European society to be anchored there, they need an exchange of students and, simply, a permanent contact. We cannot see the problem like this: You were shooting in Vilnius and we will talk to Lithuanians only—this is simply impossible. It is necessary to condemn the shooting in Vilnius, but, at the same time, we must encourage negotiations and not close ourselves to one side, because by doing so we would damage the other side even more.

[NARODNA OBRODA] We have heard voices, also from Bohemia, that it would be good to create some sort of cordon sanitaire comprising Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland against the east. This would allegedly help Bohemia become integrated into Europe more quickly.

[Dienstbier] I believe that, in reality, these voices are not serious. They could have an influence on the development of various extremist movements in Bohemia, Slovakia, and Moravia as well. If the situation continues to be dramatized, then an even wider strata of the population could support such an idea. I am of the opinion that the federation's breakup would harm both republics very tragically. It is likely that the breakup would damage Slovakia much more. Economists could very easily compute what damage this would bring to the Czech lands and to Slovakia. Slovakia, due to the fact that its industry was built mostly during the last 40 years, is industrially monocultural, since almost every region is dependent on one large factory, while in the Czech lands there is a much greater diversification due to an industrialization process lasting for more than 150 years and in every region there is some substitute activity for almost everyone. It would be an economic catastrophe in any event and probably a greater one for Slovakia.

If I accept the theory of the federation's breakup, it would mean, from the point of view of intentional politics, that there would be nothing else left for the Czech lands but to immediately make efforts, without any hesitation and under any circumstances, to become—as a poor family member—integrated much more quickly. However, this would be an emergency solution only, since you can imagine how the area east of us would look. The federation's breakup would be a breakup causing a serious crisis. The Hungarians, for example, are very afraid that as a result of Czechoslovakia's breakup, they would be pushed toward the Balkans for a long time, until even the Balkans reach the European level. From the security point of view, the cordon sanitaire has proved to be a great illusion of no importance. On the contrary, we need all countries to unite. That is to say, we live in an era of integration and not in an era of single-nation states. This era is over....

[NARODNA OBRODA] ....but we have to get over it very fast....

[Dienstbier] We have to realize that as this [the creation of a cordon sanitaire] did not happen in the past, today it would represent a complication on the road to Europe, since Europe has progressed much further in the meantime. By the way, this in not the only neglected problem in our state.

[NARODNA OBRODA] When speaking about Slovakia's industrial monoculture, we face a serious problem—which was also discussed during your recent visit to Iran—pertaining to the delivery of heavy weapons that are manufactured almost exclusively in Slovakia's munition works. We know that allies from the anti-Iraqi coalition have presented some of their ideas to our government. Discussions were held in Teheran, but no final word has been said. What is your opinion about it, can we expect a negative or a positive standpoint toward this "sale of the century"?

[Dienstbier] As you know, we are intensively discussing all that in these days and weeks. Foreign ministers from all interested countries are traveling.... I met former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on Tuesday [12 March] with whom I discussed these problems in detail, and it seems that there is an interest in reaching an agreement—also involving all the countries from this region—according to which the Middle East would disarm instead of completing its stockpiles of weapons. If the negotiations are successful and an agreement is reached, then this market will simply cease to exist, regardless of what we want. But, it is in our interest that disarmament take place there.

We have now seen a very specific example of this. Damages caused by Iraq to the CSFR alone represent 2.4 billion korunas, if we count everything, including the contracts we should have signed. It is in our interest, too, that the likelihood of war be limited in this part of the world. To say nothing of the fact that attempts to establish such an alliance as the one we have today could fail in the future if the problems there remain unresolved. Some other regional power could come into being that could have not only nuclear weapons under the heavy-handed control of some dictator, but also chemical and bacteriological weapons. This means, in my opinion, that the pressure to initiate disarmament rather than to complete arms stockpiles will be strong.

Only then, if this initiative were not to succeed, would the arms race begin and—should this be the case—we will have to be very careful about what we deliver to this region. I am of the opinion that this is not so important in the case of

tanks, since the most modern military technology was able to almost completely eliminate Iraqi tanks.

[NARODNA OBRODA] We would like to return to one problem that agitated the Slovak political scene after your speech in Germany in which you presented the results of Czechoslovak foreign policy. This problem pertains to the representation of Slovaks in the diplomatic corps or rather in the entire state foreign service. After this speech, Minister Knazko even demanded that Czech Republic and Slovak Republic citizens be represented in this service on a parity principle. How is your ministerial department going to solve this extremely sensitive problem?

[Dienstbier] It is difficult to talk about parity if neither Czechs nor Slovaks are able to present qualified diplomats, since it is impossible to find them anywhere. Simply, they could not have been brought up during these long years. However, this is not a specific problem of the foreign service only. This problem appears in other spheres, too. If my information is correct, then the ratio of Czechs to Slovaks is about two to one, which corresponds—in my opinion—to the ratio between the inhabitants of both republics. I am of the opinion that it is difficult to demand parity if we take into account that each citizen of our federation has to have equal rights. If certain citizens outnumber other citizens by two to one, then it is impossible to demand beforehand—or to issue a decree to that effect—that the citizens of the other republic should have some preferential treatment in access to the foreign service. However, if more Slovaks than Czechs win in the competitions that we organize, then let more Slovaks be hired for the foreign service. In my opinion, we have to stick to the principle—whoever is better, let him represent the country. In my opinion, no nation is wiser than another nation, and in this manner we will also achieve, in a natural way, a natural ratio between the citizens of both republics [in the foreign service], since citizens belonging to other nationalities also live in these republics. I am principally rejecting the argument that a Slovak will represent Slovakia in diplomatic services better than a Czech, since any diplomat who would represent his republic better than the federation should not be in diplomatic corps. Every diplomat must represent the whole of Czechoslovakia equally, that is, he must also represent the interests of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. This is quite clear and self-evident. We cannot select people according to who would better represent a certain part of the federation. The third argument is very practical—we do not have enough qualified diplomats of any nationality. As I have said, we are organizing competitions and we are preparing principal changes to this competition system. It should include graduate studies finalized by exams. Each graduate would receive a certificate that would entitle him to submit a job application for a position in the foreign service, but that certificate would also entitle him, so to speak, to apply for job positions in other spheres of international relations, for example, in enterprises or institutions. This cannot be done immediately, however; we are studying experience gained in various countries, and we also want to create conditions for such studies.

[NARODNA OBRODA] Mr. Dienstbier, one final question, a personal one, so to speak, to you as my former colleague, to a journalist who went from a microphone to a boiler room—where he was illegally active as a publicist—and from the boiler room to the post of the chief of Czechoslovak diplomacy. Do you not sometimes have the impression that the roots of our domestic problems are in the lack of communication, intentional or unintentional, not only among politicians and institutions, but also among ordinary people? Is that not the rub that prevents a better mutual knowledge of each other, despite the fact that we have been living in a common state for more than 70 years—with the exception of the six year intermission [1939 - 1945], of course? What is your opinion about journalists' responsibility for strengthening mutual understanding, and what judgment would you pass on the foreign policy columns in our newspapers and magazines?

[Dienstbier] You know, I do not have time to read everything. Every day I receive a few clippings and then, when I have time, I peruse a newspaper and that is why I do not feel qualified to pass judgment on the overall level of the press. But, as I see it, there are very few journalistic personalities shaping up who would be able to improve the standard of our newspapers. We also must take into account that a good journalistic personality has to be shaped for about twenty years, which was not quite possible in the recent past. The situation is similar in other spheres. I have the impression that there might be some journalistic personalities, but they are dangerous because they push for some kind of originality at any price, disregarding the consequences. In my opinion, we have good and bad papers, yet we still lack an excellent paper. It requires time for such a newspaper to appear. On the other hand, I can see many gifted people around, and after they acquire the necessary experience of life, the situation will not be so bad. As far as the problem with communication is concerned, this problem is complicated for a number of reasons—lack of qualification and time, since everyone is overworked. I, personally, would rather communicate and find out what the people think, but there is really no time for it in this whirligig. It is easy to say that responsibility is the most important thing, but this responsibility can stem from profound knowledge and experience only, and from goodwill, of course.

Last 12 Soviet Tanks Depart Country

LD2703183191 Prague Domestic Service in Czech 1500 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] The last 12 of the 1,220 tanks originally deployed by the Soviet Army on our territory over the past almost 23 years were loaded up today in the railway station in Milovice in Mlada Bolesav District. Michael Kocab, chairman of the legislative commission supervising Soviet troop withdrawal, stressed that attention will now

have to be focused on finalizing the agreement on property rights and financial settlement between the two countries. At the same time he reaffirmed his resolve to surrender his deputy mandate when the last Soviet soldier leaves Czechoslovakia.

Biggest Redeployment of Troops in 70 Years Planned

LD2703183891 Prague CTK in English 1617 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Bratislava March 27 (CTK)—Thirty-five to 38 per cent of Czechoslovak Army troops will be deployed on the territory of Slovakia, the eastern smaller part of Czechoslovakia, by 1993 in what will be the biggest movement of troops in the Czecho-Slovak Army's 70-year history.

Speaking at a press conference here today, Czechoslovak Deputy Defence Minister for Social and Humanitarian Issues Antonin Rasek stated that the redeployment of the troops is based on the military doctrine, approved by the federal parliament last week, which aims at a proportionate alignment of units all over the country. Until recently the practice was to concentrate the troops along the country's western borders. Rasek said the redeployment is closely linked with providing social certainties for career soldiers, e.g. housing, employment for their wives and education for their children.

Rasek stated that altogether 10,000 career soldiers left the Army in 1990, and admitted that others are expected to leave due to the redeployment.

Defence Ministry Spokesman Peter Tax told journalists that the Czechoslovak anti-chemical unit stationed in the Persian Gulf region is expected to return home within two months but no decision had been made yet.

Conflicting Laws Emerge in Screening Debate

AU2703091891 Bratislava NARODNA OBRODA in Slovak 23 Mar 91 p 2

[Report by Juraj Racz, CTK: "Catharsis, or a Moral Debacle"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The registers of former secret police collaborators, used by the commission in its work and as the basis for the publication of the names of the deputies—agents or collaborators—have not been declassified. That was confirmed by Interior Minister J. Langos in an interview with CTK correspondents. In response to the question of whether P. Toman, spokesman of the legislative investigative commission, could acquaint the public with the data obtained from the registers, the minister said: "It was done on the basis of a decision made by the Federal Assembly, which has legislative powers. There are two contradictory laws: the resolution by the legislature that ordered the investigative commission to follow certain guidelines and the law that classifies certain facts." Replying to the question how one should have proceeded, Minister Langos said that only the Federal Assembly Presidium has the authority to declassify facts.

"The file registers were declassified and made accessible only to the members of the investigative commission," Petr Toman, the commission spokesman, said. He added that the commission presented its report on the basis of the plenary resolution that includes an instruction specifying that the names are to be made public. "We have not declassified the file registers, we only reported what we learned in the registers. And we did so on the basis of a stipulation in the rules of procedure (Article 91, Section 6)," he pointed out. Petr Toman admitted that the publication of data from the registers resulted in a clash of two laws. "The fact that people were accused of collaboration with the State Security, of whom some, perhaps Deputy Kavan and maybe others, might be innocent, is a moral debacle of the Assembly," Deputy Michael Kocab (OF) [Civic Forum] stated to the CTK correspondents.

The Federal Assembly session will continue on Tuesday, 26 March, with a discussion of the vetting results.

Kucirkova Denies Decision To Appeal to The Hague

AU2703163691 Prague CTK in English 1836 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Prague March 25 (CTK)—President of the Prague 7 District Court Ladislava Kucirkova denied reports she intended to lodge a complaint to the Czechoslovak Prosecutor General and the International Court at The Hague about the violation of a court's decision by the Czechoslovak parliament.

In a statement she handed over to CTK today she referred to last Friday's session of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly dealing with the vetting of deputies. At the session she was quoted as having decided to appeal to the International Court at the Hague in the case of two deputies whom the screening commission found on the register of collaborators of the former state secret police. These two earlier turned to the Prague 7 court to prevent the publication of their names until their lawsuit is over. The Prague 7 court informed the vetting commission of its ruling mentioning the "protection of personality".

Though chairman of the House of Nations of the Federal Assembly Milan Sutovec informed the parliament last Friday of Kucirkova's decision to appeal to the court at the Hague, Kucirkova said she has never intended to make such a decision and does not intend to do so.

Dubcek: Public Screening Harmful to Assembly

AU2703165691 Prague CTK in English 1829 GMT 24 Mar 91

[Text] Prague March 24 (CTK)—Czechoslovak Federal Assembly Chairman Alexander Dubcek has told CTK that in his opinion the parliament's prestige has suffered as a result of the public disclosures of the names of deputies registered as collaborators of the former secret police StB.

Dubcek said he has always demanded that the discussion of these issues be fair, civilized and in full harmony with Czechoslovak and international law. However, he said, his calls were not heeded, just as his demand that the screening should not be conducted in public because it is at variance with the Bill of Basic Rights and Liberties.

"I am still convinced that those whose names were read should have not only the chance to defend themselves but primarily the presumption of innocence should apply to them, just as it is with all laws". Dubcek said commenting on Friday's parliamentary session at which ten parliamentary deputies were listed before the TV cameras as registered in the former secret police files.

Dubcek also voiced his stand on the situation in his Public Against Violence (VPN) Slovak movement. He described the differentiation of views in VPN as "natural". "Various constructions about an attempted leftist coup involving an alleged formation of a bloc of Obroda members (1968 reform communists-ed.), present communists and even a group from the (1939-1945) nationalist Slovak state are only to twist and misinform public opinion". Dubcek said.

In his opinion the split of VPN is due to the fact that it has deviated from its former center policy.

Calfa Address on Economic Situation

LD2703122291 Prague Domestic Service in Slovak 0818 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Address by Czechoslovak Prime Minister Marian Calfa to the 14th session of the Federal Assembly in Prague—live]

[Text] Esteemed Deputies, esteemed Federal Assembly: The first two months of 1991 are behind us. The fundamental steps of economic reform have begun. On the one hand, too short a time has gone by for us to be able to draw concrete, detailed conclusions; on the other hand, the first results available confirm our expectations on the course of the main economic changes.

Probably no one expected this to be a simple affair, and the federal government has made no secret of this at any time. The aim of the economic reform is not to damage ordinary people for the sake of it; on the contrary, it represents the only way of interrupting the long descent into the abyss of economic breakdown and backwardness. If we are to deal with the legacies of the past, and if we are not to weigh down future generations with the mortgage of further debts, we must also go through the stage of a fall in the standard of living. The important thing is that this stage should be as short as possible.

The electoral period of this government is very short. The government could pursue a policy of popular steps. In its final consequences, however, this would be supremely irresponsible. Therefore, the government began its work with the knowledge that in such a short period no one will thank it for its approach. The process of economic reform is a process of exceptional conflict. It comes up against firmly entrenched interests, it attacks stereotypes, and it breaks down illusions. There are also doubts about whether the correct way has been chosen, and difficult issues are being presented to the government. Demands for greater information are growing, as are critical voices, expressing rejection and offering advice and alternative scenarios. At the same time, there is a growing wave of demands on the resources of society, which is not accompanied by an equal input of programs on how to create such resources.

The political scene is beginning to come to life with nonspecific but, on the whole, concrete promises by various politicians, unfortunately once again without credible clarification of how these promises would be fulfilled in practice. Politicization has gone full steam ahead.

For this reason we welcome the initiative of the Federal Assembly, as well as the initiatives of our social partners, as a mutually suitable opportunity to clarify the fundamental issues of the government's economic policy. The time has come to dispel continuing illusions about the real possibilities for the Czechoslovak economy today and to correctly interpret the economic policy that is being undertaken, as well as other intentions. At the same time, the time has come to unmask the nonspecific alternatives and the illusionary nature of demands on resources that do not exist. The time has also come to remind ourselves of the real division of responsibility between all bodies of our state for future development.

In the recent period, there has been a unique collection of problems: the breakup of the market of Eastern European states; the inherited internal debts of enterprises, banks, and the budget; oil shocks; the unification of Germany; the war in the Gulf. Just for illustration, I will say that the agreement with the Soviet Union, which was entered into with difficulty, only secures on exports at 30 percent of last year's level. It is estimated that deliveries to the Soviet Union will, this year, present a maximum of 50 percent of last year's level, despite the fact that we are making the greatest efforts to maintain effective economic contacts with the center, the republics, and enterprises. Following the currency unification in Germany, there was a sharp fall in interest in our goods. So the trade balance in relation to the former GDR in 1990 ended for us with a deficit of $1 billion.

In some cases, however, we create the complicated situations ourselves. The federal government, together with the governments of the republics, prepared and also began economic reform in a situation during which its real powers are gradually being reduced, especially in relation to influencing economic processes. Executive powers have largely been transferred to the republics and they continue to change; reorganization of the apparatus is permanently under way. This has an unfavorable effect on the capability for action of the federal government and the republic governments; it complicates and slows down the decisionmaking process. At the same time, to reach a consensus daily and decide on the

approach to and method of influencing economic subjects regarding their behavior on the market that is coming into being, during the course of events, is a political prerequisite for reform.

Conflicts about the structure of the state, powers, changes in the sequence of dealing with important laws, and difficulties during discussions on them, the growing battles for personal political position, and tendencies to increase the tension in the state—none of these contributes to the formation of a creative environment in which we could work more fruitfully.

The government is fully aware of the complicated nature of the current economic situation. However, it is necessary to say who is responsible for what. All the current problems are very conveniently being associated with the activity of the federal government, even though the appropriate powers have been successively taken away from it and the federal resources have been minimized. Without augmenting the executive powers of the government and without making full use of those powers in liaison with the republican governments, it will be very difficult to stabilize the situation quickly. This aspect should be fully taken into account in drawing up the new constitutions.

Despite all the problems and negative phenomena, it can be noted that the new economic system is being established on the whole without any significant delay. The predominating sign is that supply and demand are coming into line. In the past, demand was chronically greater than supply, but this year the reverse signs are beginning to appear.

What, then, is the real economic development against the background of the progress of the reform? As we envisaged, since the beginning of the year the generation of gross national product is declining. This stems in particular from a fall in industrial and construction output and in the procurement of livestock products and crops in agriculture. In the first two months of this year, industrial production in Czechoslovakia fell in comparison with the same period last year by 5.8 percent. In construction work, this fall amounts to 33 percent. Another predicted feature is the rise in prices. Since the initial jump in January, the trend has been toward stabilization, and the price of certain goods is gradually falling slightly. Food products have already entered this phase, but in industrial goods the process is taking place with some delay. Since the beginning of the year unemployment has been rising, and at the end of February the number of people registered as seeking work was 152,000, which is roughly 2 percent of the workforce. We are giving these overall figures for the federation, but it must be realized that in industrial production and construction, as well as in unemployment, the trend is worse in Slovakia than in the Czech Republic.

Two basic features of economic development prevail: the trade crisis and the increase in enterprise insolvencies, especially in the state sector. These two phenomena are closely connected.

In addition to the loss of foreign markets, demand at home is also falling markedly. This is reflected both in the investment market and the consumer market. In the new situation, the public is adopting a markedly more cautious approach, particularly in consumption. They are also making different use of their money, investing more in property and hard currency. More use is being made of opportunities offered by commercial banks than by conventional savings.

The main reason for the enterprise insolvencies, which reached a peak at the end of February at the level of 80 billion korunas, is the sales barrier and slow adaptation to the new conditions. Some of the problems of the enterprises' financial situation are being tackled by establishing a consolidation bank into which credits amounting to 120 billion have been transferred. However, enterprises are still trying to rely on funds from the center and are expecting direct and concrete solutions from there too. Speculation with pressure tactics is also appearing. An inflexible and insufficiently selective approach is also being shown in commercial bank branches. In no case will the government accept the concept of individual debt for which, furthermore, it has no funds. To allow selective individual subsidies would mean that the future of enterprises would once again be decided by the ministerial structures instead of the by the enterprises themselves by operating in the market in such a way as to demonstrate their efficiency and prospects to the relevant commercial bank. Another reason the government will not accept this concept is because it shifts the solution of the sales crisis on to the budget and ultimately therefore on to the public.

Since the beginning of the year, the state budgets have been coming under heavy pressure for additional spending. The heaviest pressure is on the federal budget, from which an additional 5-6 billion korunas has already been drawn as a consequence of the postponement of coal, gas, and heat price rices to 15 March. Together with price liberalization, the most significant element of our reform strategy at the beginning of the year was the shift to internal convertibility of the koruna. This is creating extraordinary pressure on hard-currency reserves that are, however, being maintained at an acceptable level. The increase in our debt is within the expected range, and its repayment is not in jeopardy.

The privatization of small businesses has begun. In addition to the factual result of this, which is the transfer of private [as heard] property into the hands of private businessmen, we are all learning to understand what the true value - the market value - of the means of production is.

In the territory of the CSFR as a whole, approximately 600 businesses have already been auctioned. The gross yield of this sale amounts to more than 300 million korunas. In the next few weeks these figures will increase several times over. The private sector is growing, not only thanks to the privatization process. Hundreds of thousands of private businessmen are in operation, but their true viability will be

tested by the market. The sphere with the fewest private businesses is the manufacturing sector.

The number of enterprises with foreign share capital is rising, but their capital strength is small. Consequently, the government has decided to fully liberalize the setting up of such enterprises, provided that the partner on our side is a legally constituted private businessman under our law or, as the case may be, under foreign law. From the point of view of the economy, the most significant enterprises are, of course, those whose founding capital exceeds 10 million korunas—there are 70 of these in all. Twelve enterprises have a capital exceeding 100 million korunas, and three have a capital of more than 1 billion korunas.

The overall assessment for the three months of this year shows that the economic reform is being implemented, in principle, according to the government's scenario. In this period, despite certain unpleasant attendant features of the ongoing transformation, the positive elements of the changes being implemented are also beginning to appear. Among these are undoubtedly the gradual elimination of the permanent prevalence of demand over supply, the growing role of the consumer in the marketplace, the expansion of services, and changes in the way enterprises operate.

The linchpin of the reform program is still rapid and extensive privatization, the continuing liberalization of prices, the increasing extent of the convertibility of the Czechoslovak koruna, and the stripping away of all superfluous restrictions on free foreign trade. The state will also create the basic conditions for the activity of sovereign economic entities by continuing to build the legislative framework, by setting up those institutions of a market economy that are not yet in existence, and by pursuing an effective macroeconomic regulation policy on the basis of our monetary and financial policy.

The federal government will continue to be very restrained in its direct intervention policy to support selected and limited economic activities.

The funds earmarked for this purpose in the federal budget are severely restricted. Extensive state intervention, the individual planning and management of whole sectors or enterprises, the working out of detailed expansion or contraction plans, the financial cushioning or subsidization of clearly inefficient production processes or those producing goods that have no guaranteed market—all these are things of the past, never to return. Not only does the government not intend to return to that, it cannot do so even if it is continually asked to do so.

The government, however, still has scope for additional short- or medium-term economic policy measures that could partly replace direct intervention, particularly in the transitional period. What we have in mind are sensitive price regulation measures according to market trends, limited delegation of powers, and import surcharges. To a limited extent it can also provide guarantees for bank credits or interest payments and—exceptionally—it can provide subsidies. The shaping of structural programs of federal importance is determined to a considerable degree by the existing division of powers. At present it is concentrating on the conversion of weapons production, in which it expects to make a financial contribution from the federal state budget's special-purpose reserve.

In the very near future, the government will discuss measures for retaining the capacity for Czechoslovak weapons production essential to the defense of the state, and the state special equipment fund will be topped up with 500 million korunas from the federal state budget. The government has no objection to exports from weapons enterprises going to politically acceptable territories. We also consider it necessary to stress that, in its structural policy, the government is not intending to make any administrative contraction of enterprises producing goods that have a market and where the customers actually pay for the goods.

In the interests of providing support for businesses and mitigating the impact of exceptional losses, the government is considering support for exports and selective payment of interest rate differences for exporters to a total amount of 500 million korunas.

The short- and medium-term aims of economic policy still apply. Among these are providing an effective brake on the rise in inflation, keeping the fall in gross national product as low as possible, minimizing unemployment, and moderating the rise in foreign debt. This restrictive policy will be bolstered by a corresponding wages and income policy.

Of late there has been much confusion in our country in respect of our relations with the IMF. Czechoslovakia's relationship with the IMF is one of partnership, because we are one of its shareholders. Federal economic policy is solely in the hands of the Czechoslovak Government. The role of the IMF is only an advisory one. On the basis of its own economic program, the government asked for a loan, and therefore it decided for itself that it would adhere to certain rules that, in their sum total, express the content of that economic program.

The government entered talks with the IMF with a clear concept, and the discussions centered solely on the quantity and not the quality of the program. Provided we meet the main quantitative criteria in terms of the amount of money in the economy, a reasonable level of state budget debt in respect to the banks, the development of hard-currency reserves, and the level of debt, then no fundamental problem will arise between Czechoslovakia and the IMF, even though we will have different views on certain matters.

The basic strategy of our finance policy in the immediate term is still a consistent restrictive policy in the state budget sphere as approved by the Federal Assembly. The government fundamentally rejects ideas that increasing budget spending is the way to tackle the various malaises in our economy. On the other hand the government expects to help tackle certain financial problems associated with the development of the economy. Another 500

million korunas is to be released from the state budget for expenses incurred in introducing or operating regulating equipment in heat supply systems. The state budget will play a part in compensating for losses incurred by the embargo against Iraq and Kuwait.

The decisive element in the area of prices is their liberalization on the market. Despite this, the government will not hesitate to introduce, even temporarily, the regulation of prices everywhere where extensive misuse is taking place on the basis of cartel agreements or in the case of a monopoly position of some firms on the relevent markets. Cases of extensive and clear violation of price regulations will be made public.

Following agreement from the governments of the republics, the federal government will in the very near future decide on the removal of subsidies on prices of fuels and energy in such a way as to ensure that they correspond to the real level of expenditure and cost of inputs. This measure will be accompanied by partial social compensation for pensioners and families with children, and, with the participation of the republics, system measures for the support of measurement of consumption of heat energy in buildings used for housing and in apartments.

A significant step in economic reform is the restructuring of the tax system. The work is being hindered by some problems of powers emerging from the proposal by the bodies of the Slovak Republic that envisages a limitation on the direct effect of the tax laws of the Federal Assembly on those who pay. This cannot be allowed, however, where basic taxes are concerned. Above all, this would not correspond to the need for a unified basic legal norm for the direct taxation of income of enterprises, organizations, and inhabitants, as well as indirect taxation; that is, consumer taxes. The draft laws being prepared are based on the tax systems of economically developed states. A great change in particular will be the introduction of value added tax from 1 January 1993. Until then, the government is not planning more marked legal changes in government levies and taxes.

One of the conditions for the functioning of the present and, in particular, the future tax systems is a flexible and effective tax administration that strengthens the legal awareness of citizens. The citizens must feel that no one can steal from the state, and thus from themselves, with impunity. For this reason, the government considers the improvement of the situation in this sector to be an urgent matter. From a long-term point of view, the most significant element of economic reform is the change in ownership rights concerning the means of production. On the basis of the principles of large-scale privatization, approximately 400-600 of today's state enterprises will be selected and privatized by means of methods tested in the world: direct sale, or by selling the government's property interests.

It is not possible, however, to transfer the whole volume of property capable of privatization into private ownership in a reasonably short time. Therefore a plan for privatizing a large group of state enterprises by means of investment coupons is being drawn up, in liaison with the republican agencies. The actual sale of shares will be carried out at the beginning of next year.

The government will continue to expand support for small and medium-sized private businesses, for example by granting tax relief and credit guarantees, by making it possible to write off capital assets promptly, by introducing simpler rules for guiding wage trends, and so forth. This process will be underpinned by further legislation, such as the draft trading regulations now being drawn up and the bill on commercial practice, by an updated civil code and civil law regulations, and also by the development of the activity of antimonopoly commercial and financial offices. Ladies and gentlemen, we have endeavored to present you with a realistic report on the state of the economy and the further progress of our economic policy. Despite the unfavorable circumstances, we are convinced that within two years we will see economic performance beginning to improve and living standards beginning to rise again and that we will take a place in the developmental stream of the advanced part of the world economy. The first condition if we are to maintain this trend is that we do not drag our feet in prosecuting the economic reform. The second condition is an economic policy that is sufficiently flexible. If the federal government is to be able to act flexibly, however, it needs effective cooperation by everyone who takes a real part in shaping economic policy. The current system of executive powers in the CSFR is not conducive to carrying out a flexible policy, and it often opens up a gap between concept and implementation. This means that the federal government, which is being held fundamentally accountable for the operation of the unified economy and the course of the reform, is seeing its scope for the possibility of implementing that reform speedily being reduced.

The transition to a democratic society is altering the role of the main state agencies considerably. In the end, however, it boils down to a joint political and moral responsibilty. The extent of our responsibility—our joint responsibility—is exceptionally great at this current stage in our history, regardless of whether that responsibility is being met at republican or federal level. Thank you for your attention. [applause]

Prime Minister Calfa Interviewed on VPN Split

AU2803102091 Bratislava VEREJNOST in Slovak 25 Mar 91 p 2

[Interview with CSFR Prime Minister Marian Calfa by Juraj Gressner; in Bratislava on 24 March: "The Differences in the Public Against Violence Movement Are Logical"—first paragraph is VEREJNOST introduction]

[Text] We met the federal prime minister in the Mozart House on Jiraskova Street in Bratislava yesterday evening. In view of the current political situation in

Czechoslovakia, we did not allow him to catch his breath and asked him for an interview. He did not refuse...

[Gressner] What is your opinion of the split within the Public Against Violence [VPN] movement, of which you are a member?

[Calfa] The split is logical, and I believe that we have to perceive the entire situation in a new way. There was a nationwide VPN congress in Topolcany, but this is history now.... As it appears now, economic and social problems—and the way of solving them—will have priority in the near future.

[Gressner] Am I right in saying that you are a supporter of Meciar's party?

[Calfa] Meciar's party does not exist! A new VPN platform has been constituted—the "For a Democratic Slovakia" platform; it has its own policy, that is, it has a different opinion about the course of economic reform than the others have.

[Gressner] In his recent speeches the Slovak Prime Minister stressed the national program of economic reform....

[Calfa] He supports a certain policy that emphasizes Slovak issues while suppressing matters that place Czechoslovakia in a dominant position.

[Gressner] Is this program drifting away from the "federal views"?

[Calfa] The federation has a future, yet different people think differently about it, of course. I have gained experience about the functioning of federations in the world, and we all should exploit this experience. Let us not, for God's sake, create some kind of special case in Central Europe.

[Gressner] What do you mean?

[Calfa] We in Slovakia are constantly saying that Slovakia has some specific economic and other conditions and that Slovakia is—in comparison to other European countries—somehow specific or exceptional. I am saying, however, that our young people are the same as their peers all over the world! They are educated, they speak foreign languages, they are entrepreneurial.... Simply, they are intelligent and they have class. I even believe that they do not live a worse life than those in the West....

[Gressner] Let us return to the core of the problem, however; to the "divorce" within the VPN. Will it have an impact on domestic development in Czechoslovakia and, if it does, what kind of impact will it be?

[Calfa] Of course, a negative one because—as you have put it—the "divorce" within the VPN cannot be compared to the conflict within the Civic Forum. In the latter case, the proponents of differing opinions separated in a cultured way and with class, which is something that even I would be willing to accept in the case of the VPN.

[Gressner] Were the Czechs not interested in such a dramatic separation and a possible VPN breakup in Slovakia?

[Calfa] Which Czechs? I do not distinguish between Czechs and Slovaks according to their nationality, but according to their intelligence, skills, and character, and also according to decency, culture, and other qualities. There are various sorts of Czechs and Slovaks. Tolerant people can always reach an agreement.

Meciar Speaks to Foreign Journalists

AU2703163291 Prague CTK in English 1245 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Text] Bratislava March 23 (CTK)—Slovak Premier Vladimir Meciar said last night that after the fall of military-political blocs, Slovakia is opening to everyone coming with good intentions.

He noted that its strategic position between Germany and the Soviet Union means for the Slovak Republic that it can find political guarantees only in balanced relations with these two countries and also in good contacts with Britain, France and Italy.

Speaking to some two dozen foreign journalists touring Slovakia at the invitation of the Slovak Government, he expressed his conviction that although there will often be "seemingly very dramatic" moments, the Slovaks and the Czechs will finally reach agreement to live in one state and on what it should look like.

"The essence of the dispute between the Slovaks and the Czechs rests mainly in their different views on the constitutional set-up", he said at the press conference which took place at Modra-Harmonia near Bratislava.

In the Slovak view, the federation is formed from below while the Czech side believes that the federation already exists and the two republics are to do what the federation devolves to them, Meciar said.

In his opinion a referendum on the future state arrangement would be premature. Most Slovaks and Czechs would apparently say "yes" if asked whether they want to live in one state but a referendum cannot answer the question what the federation should look like. Meciar said that about 15 percent in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia are for separation. A referendum should take place only if Czechoslovakia finds itself in crisis. In Meciar's opinion the future state set-up will be decided by the spring of next year.

He noted that the Slovak side's idea is common currency, defense, market and foreign policy principles while the rest should be within the powers of the constituent republics.

The premier rejected views voiced in some foreign media that there were fascist tendencies in Slovakia. He regretted the incident in Bratislava in which President Vaclav Havel and his entourage were jeered at and

attacked on March 14 as a "condemnable act by a group of people which threw a shadow on Slovakia as a whole".

Meciar said that in his opinion it will take 10-15 years for Slovakia's economy to recover and be integrated with the rest of Europe.

Commenting on the split in the Public Against Violence (VPN) he said that civic movements represent a broad range of views and are inevitably bound to split into parties after some time. In his opinion VPN was founded as a center movement but part of its leadership began to turn right after some time and thus "we, going straight ahead, have become those who have deviated", he said about his group which broke away from the movement earlier this month.

ZDS Platform Calls For VPN Assembly

AU2703130691 Bratislava NARODNA OBRODA in Slovak 25 Mar 91 p 2

["Open Letter to Members of the Public Against Violence Movement," adopted at a working meeting of representatives and sympathizers of the Public Against Violence For a Democratic Slovakia platform, held in Martin, Central Slovakia, on 23 March]

[Text] The Public Against Violence [VPN] For a Democratic Slovakia [ZDS] platform represents an independent current of opinion within the VPN that has been definitely constituted in the movement's entire organizational structure.

For this reason, and in view of the process of differentiation taking place within the VPN, the VPN Slovak Council no longer expresses the political reality. We respect the legal legitimacy of the VPN Slovak Council until the next extraordinary VPN republican assembly. Until then we reserve the right to express our own point of view. This allows us to dissociate ourselves from resolutions of the VPN Slovak Council that attack members of our platform and the platform in its entirety.

We ask VPN district Coordinating Committees to initiate, by passing the appropriate resolutions, an expeditious convening of an extraordinary VPN republican assembly to resolve problems of the movement's differentiation, as well as the principles of organizational and political cooperation, for the time until legislative elections.

We appeal to members of the VPN Slovak Council to stop their efforts at forcing a line of confrontation upon the VPN-ZDS platform.

We appeal to all VPN members who want to join the VPN-ZDS platform to announce their decision in writing to the following address: VPN-ZDS Organizing Committee, 50 Radvanska Street, 801 01 Bratislava.

Meciar Interviewed on Martin Meeting

AU2803085491 Bratislava NARODNA OBRODA in Slovak 25 Mar 91 p 3

[Interview with Slovak Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar by Peter Malar in Martin on 23 March: "The Ratio of Forces Changes Every Day"—first paragraph is NARODNA OBRODA introduction]

[Text] Martin—Following the working meeting in Martin involving supporters of the Public Against Violence [VPN] movement For a Democratic Slovakia platform, NARODNA OBRODA asked Slovak Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar for an interview.

[Malar] What is your evaluation of the meeting in Martin?

[Meciar] Undoubtedly, it was successful. Those who want to found—within the framework of the VPN—the For a Democratic Slovakia platform came together here. Although a few inaccuracies impaired the course of the proceedings, people spoke out sincerely and explained why they support this platform; they expressed the hopes that bind them to it. A great deal of criticism was directed at the former VPN Coordinating Center, at the current VPN Slovak Council, and at some of its representatives. Unfortunately, there are a lot of very specific negative experiences. I met many people here who had been in the VPN, but—for various reasons—had left the movement; now they are returning to it. However, I also came across many new people who, obviously, as a result of recent events, are striving to find new hope and new trust that again there is someone who will take notice of the people.

[Malar] A split has taken place within the VPN. What kind of relationship do you expect to evolve between the Slovak Council and the VPN For a Democratic Slovakia platform?

[Meciar] I suggested in Vranov that we should not quarrel anymore. On the day we left the council meeting, I also suggested that we acknowledge the reality of our situation, that we seek ways of becoming reconciled, and that we establish a joint umbrella organization. I feel responsible for fulfilling the movement's program and for fulfilling the government program. Everyone should feel this responsibility. However, instead of this, we are constantly being pursued by rejection, confrontation, personal invectives, threats, and various views about the legitimacy of our platform. This is a destructive attitude. The situation has even reached the stage where they would prefer to risk the VPN's decisive position within the Slovak National Council [SNR] and offer it directly to the Christian Democratic Movement.

After all, we were given our mandates to do something and not to prove that we can give someone short shrift. We must reject neither these mandates nor consensus within the VPN, because a situation could very easily arise in which it would be impossible to adopt any law in the SNR. This would be a move against citizens.

[Malar] However, fears were also expressed at Martin that no consensus will be reached within the VPN and that the VPN For a Democratic Slovakia platform will have to go its own way. Obviously, it would temporarily *drop out of the game....*?

[Meciar] No.... Our deputies in the SNR and in the Federal Assembly will continue to fulfill their duties. It would be a little complicated to form a new coalition government without us. If such a government was indeed established, it would be too unstable and too vulnerable. If our partners in the VPN continue to sulk, they could bring Slovakia to early elections.

[Malar] So, possible early elections will not surprise you? They will not catch you by surprise?

[Meciar] The voters will decide everything; I have no anxieties about their participation. However, we are not thinking about early elections in the sense that we would like to bring them about. Not at all! For example, take a look at the federal parliament today: There is a very fragile truce in it; I especially have in mind the Civic Forum. This truce could be broken at any moment and the legislature will find itself in a difficult situation. Remember the crisis the Federal Assembly got itself into during the debates on some points of its program. The coalition is, in fact, not made up of parties, but of those specific deputies who simply concur with each other regardless of their political affiliation. However, these are very fragile ties that could lead to collapse.

For example, 90 votes will be necessary in the SNR to adopt the constitution. The opposition parties are saying: Good, you need our votes now, and we are in favor of the constitution! But you did not allow us proportional representation in the SNR Presidium! This is an absolutely interesting and complicated situation. The Democratic Party has already indicated its willingness to cooperate with us and there are also possibilities for a coalition with other movements likewise undergoing internal differentiation. The process currently taking place publicly within the VPN is fermenting in private elsewhere. Those who have the opportunity to look behind the scenes will ascertain that the ratio of forces changes every day.

Meciar Assailed for Views on Magyars

LD2703194591 Budapest Domestic Service in Hungarian 1700 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Both the Independent Magyar Initiative [FMK] and the Egyuetteles have rejected the statement of Slovak Prime Minister Meciar in which he declared the Magyars of Slovakia to be traitors to the nation. Evelyn Forro reports from Prague:

[Forro] The FMK's stance takes as its point of departure the fact that collective rights cannot now be in doubt and that the acquired historical viewpoint that Prime Minister Meciar represents is extremely harmful. As we have already reported, the prime minister formulated things in such a way that should the base year be taken as 1945, then the properties of those Magyars, Germans, Ukrainians—the traitors, the enemies of the nation—too should be returned, since their land was taken away under the 1945 declaration.

The FMK pointedly stresses that at the time about 300 people were proved to be war criminals, and they were not given Czechoslovak citizenship again. Those who were given it are not war criminals, and the law declares that only those who still live here and who are Czechoslovak citizens can have land returned.

Meciar's accusation, according to which the intention is to take away land from the Slovaks living here to give them to the Magyars, also lacks foundation because only state [land] property is at issue.

The Egyuetteles movement categorically rejects those statements in which Meciar mentions Magyars and Germans in the same breath as traitors to the nation. Although not in words, in practice the Slovak prime minister still professes the principle of collective guilt and degrades the members of the ethnic Hungarian minority into second-class citizens, the Egyuetteles statement reads. It also demands that Meciar should withdraw his declarations, which unjustly punish national minorities.

Comparison of Meciar's Address to the SNR

AU2203124691

Bratislava NARODNA OBRODA in Slovak on 21 March on page 7, under the headline "Vladimir Meciar: Point Out to Me Specific Mistakes," carries 2,500-word "excerpts" from Slovak Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar's speech at the 20 March meeting of the Slovak National Council (SNR). The NARODNA OBRODA version has been compared to the Bratislava radio version published in the 21 March East Europe DAILY REPORT revealing the following variations:

Page 12, column one, first paragraph reads: [Text] I apologize for my address, but my body is worn out and I am sure that I will have to make up in bed for every minute that I spend sitting here. But the subject matter is so important that I prefer having to stay in bed longer to not being here at all. (rewording and providing indistinct passage).

Same page, column two, fourth full paragraph, second sentence reads: No, I cannot. I cannot therefore serve as a transmission belt for the implementation of the resolutions of any political group, all the more so as many of the resolutions, with the implementation of which I have been charged, did not go through the Public Against Violence [VPN] Council and the VPN Council did not even know about them. (providing omitted passage).

Page 13, column one, first partial paragraph, first partial sentence reads: ...will be recalled and the president says that everything will be... (providing indistinct words).

Page 14, column one, second full paragraph, sentence five reads: ...political mistake was ascertained. What did I... (providing queried word).

Same page, same column, third full paragraph, sentence four reads: ...account of it. I will, of course, bear responsibility, but not because I must bear it. But do, please, if you can, point out specific mistakes to me. Do not instruct commissions to look for my mistakes. If specific objections were raised in the press and in political movements, then collect and define them. According to the instructions, the issues to be examined include, for example, the Demikat case and the case of the head of the Kosice Regional StB [State Security] Administration Dicky....

There is one more thing I would like to say here. We cannot work using the method of gaining one's ends little by little [salamovou metodou]. Citizens are awaiting... (supplying variant wording and providing queried passages and words).

Same page, column two, first partial paragraph, last sentence reads: ...will be resolved anyhow.

As far as... (providing indistinct word).

Same page, same column, first full paragraph, sentence four reads: ...of its prime minister? Can we not widen the resolution to include the examination of these pronouncements as well? It speaks of... (providing press version of queried sentence).

Democrats' Statement on Slovak Political Crisis

AU2803113891 Bratislava NARODNA OBRODA in Slovak 25 Mar 91 p 2

["Excerpts" from a statement issued to CTK by the Democratic Party on 24 March; place not given: "Let Us Destroy This Cantankerous Virus"]

[Text] Bratislava—On Sunday [24 March] the Democratic Party issued a statement to CTK on the current political situation. Among other things, the statement contains the following:

During the past week, we have witnessed the dramatic culmination of the split within the Public Against Violence movement, a split that has resulted in attacks being made against Slovak Prime Minister Meciar, in expressions of lack of confidence in him, and in demands that he be recalled from his post. At the same time, doubts are also being cast on the Slovak Government's ability to function and on the results it has achieved so far. A proposal has been submitted to the Slovak National Council [SNR] for the establishment of investigating committees that will have to become involved in work different from that which is much more important concerning the preparation of new legal norms and the adoption of the Slovak Republic constitution.

The current political situation and the possible collapse of the coalition would significantly alter the ratio of forces on the political spectrum. However, this ratio does not correspond to the results of the June 1990 legislative elections. This situation could have a far-reaching impact not only on the Slovak Government's ability to function, but also on the legislature, the SNR.

Because the local elections highlighted society's black and white orientation, there is a theory here that the new long-term orientation of society in Slovakia could be determined in future legislative elections. Each of these orientations could lead to a new hegemony—totalitarianism.

Therefore, it is necessary for citizens of Slovakia to decide what kind of Slovakia they want. In the interest of the great majority of citizens, Slovakia should be democratic and liberal.

Now what Slovakia needs most of all, for consolidation and for stability in the interest of the country's economy, is peace. Let us try to destroy this cantankerous and disharmonious virus and to return to what is most important—hard work for the good of Slovakia.

SNS Leader on Party's Social Policy

AU2703111891 Bratislava PRAVDA in Slovak 25 Mar 91 p 2

[Interview with newly elected Slovak National Party Chairman Jozef Prokes by Martin Krno; in Nove Zamky on 23 March: "People Cannot Be Abandoned Like Cars"—first paragraph is PRAVDA introduction]

[Text] The second Slovak National Party [SNS] assembly held in Nove Zamky elected as its chairman 40-year-old Dr. Jozef Prokes, Candidate of Sciences. Until recently, he was an employee at the Slovak Academy of Sciences Measurement and Measuring Technology Institute. He has been a Slovak National Council [SNR] deputy since February 1990. Shortly after his election, he replied to a few questions.

[Krno] At the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990 you were one of the initiators of the establishment of independent Slovak trade unions and you were the unions' first chairman. Following your election to the leadership of the SNS, will the social aspect of its orientation become more significant?

[Prokes] Contrary to many of our economists, I am of the opinion that the social dimension in economic reform is not a question of charity, but is a necessity. If the number of unemployed exceeds a certain limit, we will reach a point beyond which only unrestrainable decline threatens us. During the last SNR session, I appealed to the government to entrust the scenario for reform to the theater. A serious plan should now be submitted. I consider the trade unions to be a natural opponent of the ruling economic structure. The Communist Party showed us what could happen if opposing views were not presented. Pluralism of views is essential for the state's democratic development, both in politics and in the economy. Whoever imagines that a prosperous state is a

state with several rich individuals and would like to turn everyone else into beggars is very much mistaken.

[Krno] The SNS has new articles and a new chairman. Will adjustments to its program follow?

[Prokes] Our party lacks an information link-up between its lower elements and the leadership. We will thoroughly reevaluate this situation. However, the SNS district councils must also develop an autonomous life in their closer cooperation. In the very near future, we will concentrate on drafting the new Slovak Republic constitution and on practical solutions to economic reform. I am afraid that if Klausist policies continue to gather strength, we will find ourselves confronted with the economy's complete destruction. From time to time I ask myself whether this is not the intention. In this instance, we would face the threat of a unitary state or the situation will culminate in large-scale social unrest.

[Krno] During the past year, many people identified your party with the exhibitionist appearances made by some of your representatives....

[Prokes] Some people were expelled from the party because of their inappropriate behavior. The method of our activity prior to the legislative elections corresponded to the political behavior of the other parties. However, progress has been made since then. The SNS, like all the other political forces represented in parliament, must prove itself by the results of its work and not by words alone.

[Krno] In your 20-line curriculum vitae you state that, following your co-option into the reconstructed SNR, you presented yourself "with a demand for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia's [KSC] removal from the law's jurisdiction and for the confiscation of its property." Could you clarify your point of view?

[Prokes] A year ago, the issue for me involved the party and not its members. I proceeded from the premise that if an organization is described as a terrorist organization, this does not mean that all of its members are terrorists. However, I am anxious about the situation we have just reached—a witch-hunt by means of screenings. The simplest thing of all would have been the party's dissolution after 17 November. In this way, its membership would have been annulled. Property belonging to the former KSC would have been ceded to the state immediately so that all the parties evolving at that time could have started from similar starting blocks.

[Krno] What is your opinion of the current Party of the Democratic Left [SDL]?

[Prokes] I have the impression that continuity with the KSC has had deplorable consequences for it. Perhaps it sometimes seems in the SNR as if we have concluded some kind of partnership. However, we have not signed any agreement. We simply have one thing in common—negative views of economic reform. The SDL and the Green Party view the problem in the same way I do. That is, the propagators of current economic reform ignore the fact that people are not cars. It is impossible to abandon them when there is no gasoline. They have to eat every day. [Bratislava VEREJNOST in Slovak on 25 March on page 1, under the headline "I Have Never Concealed the Fact That I Am a Czech," carries a 300-word report by Martina Galatova on the election of Jozef Prokes as SNS chairman. According to the report, during the election of the new SNS chairman, Prokes declared that he has "never concealed the fact" that he is a Czech. He added that he has already stated this in parliament]

Results of By-Elections in 46 Slovak Villages

AU2703164291 Prague CTK in English 2052 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Text] Bratislava March 25 (CTK)—Thirty-one village councils' chairmen, one mayor and 47 deputies were elected in the March 23 by-elections in Slovakia to 15 local councils, said a report of the Slovak Electoral Commission handed to CTK today.

The majority of mandates of village councils' chairmen were won by independent candidates 13, Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) six, and Public Against Violence (VPN) candidates five.

Candidates of the Slovak Democratic Left Party (former Communist Party) won 17 seats in local councils, VPN ten and KDH nine.

The elections were held in 46 villages in which the November 23-24, 1990 and January 19, 1991 elections did not take place. 61 percent of the registered voters took part.

Antall Addresses Forum on Government Policy

LD2703192491 Budapest MTI in English 1438 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Budapest, March 27 (MTI)—The government does not wish to restore the property relationships of 1945, or its production structure, but it also does not consider the large-scale agricultural units created over the last 30 years suited to meet the demands of modern agriculture, said Prime Minister Jozsef Antall, at the national forum of Hungarian agricultural experts, in Budapest on Wednesday.

The prime minister rejected the accusation that Hungarian agricultural interests are being disregarded in order to facilitate Hungarian entry into the European Community. The truth is, he said, that the government only considers the upholding of plant cultivation, animal breeding and the food industry as just, if they are competitive on the European and world markets, and does not believe that outdated methods and low standards characteristic of the markets of the socialist countries should be maintained.

In order to create the conditions allowing Hungary to join the European Community, several state agricultural units should be allowed to operate, even if on a non-profitable basis, in order to provide for the upkeep and breeding of livestock, as well as seeing to the provision of other model farm tasks. At the same time, modern co-operative farms based on private property and enterprise should also be given possibilities, and efficient, competitive private farms should also be set up.

Arpad Goncz, president of the Republic of Hungary, greeted the conference in a letter.

Prime Minister Antall Views Agricultural Issues

LD2703203291 Budapest Domestic Service in Hungarian 1700 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Zsuzsa Vajda report]

[Text] Sorting out property relations, the land question—and within that the agriculture reform—is the largest among the burdens of the transformation. It has been impossible to achieve a consensus on these questions among the parties and within society, Prime Minister Jozsef Antall said in an address at the forum of the national agricultural intelligentsia in Budapest today.

He analyzed the past decades of agriculture. The government does not want to bring back the 1945 system of dwarf farms, and certainly not the system that subsequently evolved. The system of large units that has developed in recent years cannot be retained either, however, because it is not viable. The external and internal possibilities must be examined.

The government has, from the very beginning, declared its intention to join the European Communities, but this process cannot be too rapid, because that would be in the interests of neither party. The 12 fear for their stability, for order within, homogeneity. On the other hand, those intending to join also need time to prepare. The prime minister had the followng to say on this subject:

[Begin Antall recording] We can only develop an agricultural system in Hungary to shape our entire food production from the point of view of exports which, in the perspective of a few years, should be able to ensure our survival on European markets. It must, however, be taken into account that Hungarian exports, taken in their entirety, have dropped to below 30 percent toward the whole of the former socialist countries; taking the Soviet Union into account, exports have dropped to below 20 percent. [sentence as heard]

No one can say how political, financial, and economic relations will develop on the territory of the Soviet Union and in these countries, or how we shall be able to adjust to this. [end recording]

It was not the market that determined production in the past; a closed system of an empire evolved. Luckily, agriculture was able to adjust to the circumstances even in this situation; a second, a third economy has developed. With household plots, dwarf land holdings have evolved, the market made a start, and legislation also got started. Meanwhile, however, what had taken place in the people within, well, the system of values has become confused, and morale has disappeared. When the authority loses its moral foundation, it is a virtue to turn against that authority, to cheat it, the prime minister said. In conclusion, the prime minister spoke about the future of agriculture, the compensation law.

[Begin Antall recording] There is a need for cooperative farms of a truly entrepreneurial character and which are based on voluntarism and there is also a need for such family farms which are efficient, which can be competitive. If there is no stability in political-legal terms and in terms of right of ownership, then we cannot expect foreign investments or the growth of foreign investments. This issue, therefore, must be settled. After settling the question of ownership we must be led by issues such as efficiency, viability and production, as well as our presence in the marketplace and the ability to sell products. [end recording]

Opinion Poll Reveals Politicians' Popularity

AU2803104791 Budapest MTI in English 1207 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Budapest, 27 Mar (MTI)—A new poll on the popularity of Hungarian politicians has been conducted by the Hungarian-French Szonda-Ipsos Institute in early March. Results of the poll, based on interviewing a sample of 1,000 adults, are carried by the March 27 issue of the daily "NEPSZABADSAG," with a comparison of present results to those of the previous poll conducted early February. (popularity is measured on a 1-100 scale.)

Results are the following:

President of the Republic of Hungary Arpad Goncz: 76—as compared to February: +4

Former PM [Prime Minister] Miklos Nemeth, independent MP: 72—as compared to February: +1

Budapest Mayor Gabor Demszky: 71—as compared to February: -1

President of the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) [MSZP], Former Foreign Minister Gyula Horn: 70—as compared to February: +2

Parliamentary faction leader of the Federation of Young Democrats (FYD) [FIDESZ] Viktor Orban: 67—as compared to February: 0

FYD MP Gabor Fodor: 67—as compared to February: -2

FYD MP Tamas Deutsch: 65—as compared to February: 0

Independent MP Zoltan Kiraly: 63—as compared to February: +1

Finance Minister Mihaly Kupa: 60—as compared to February: +3

Parliamentary faction leader of the Alliance of Free Democrats (AFD) [SZDSZ] Ivan Peto: 58—as compared to February: -5

Minister of Welfare Laszlo Surjan: 56—as compared to February: -1

AFD President Janos Kis: 51—as compared to February: -1

Independent MP Imre Pozsgay: 47—as compared to February: 0

Parliamentary faction leader of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF) [MDF] Imre Konya: 47—as compared to February: 0

Prime Minister Jozsef Antall: 45—as compared to February: -1

Minister Without Portfolio Ferenc Jozsef Nagy, president of the Independent Smallholders' Party (ISP) [FKgP]: 43—as compared to February: +1

ISP MP Jozsef Torgyan, up to last week ISP Parliamentary faction leader: 39—as compared to February: +6

Foreign Minister Geza Jeszenszky: 32—as compared to February: -8

President of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Gyula Thurmer: 32—as compared to February: +3

President of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party Anna Petrasovits: 30—as compared to February: +1

Security Traders' Association Formed

LD2703125891 Budapest MTI in English 1111 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Budapest, March 27, 1991 (MTI-ECONEWS)—The Hungarian Security Traders' Association was set up in Budapest on Tuesday.

The association will accept as members organizations that have been licensed as security traders by the Security Trading Inspectorate and which do not come under the jurisdiction of the Bank Law. The association intends promoting the establishment of a free market in Hungary. It will assist in the professional training of brokers, analysts and other broker house staff, as well as seeing to their representation.

The Hungarian Security Traders' Association will cooperate with and supplement the operations of the Budapest Stock Exchange. Besides stock exchange members, the membership of the association comprises private companies founded with a capital of a few million forints, as well as large, specialized security trading organizations.

The chairman of the association is Dr Andras Laszlo, chief executive officer of Co-Nexus, plc. [public limited company] The board members are Peter Zelnik, general manager of Girozentrale Investment, plc, and Istvan Tompe, President of Daiwa-MKB Hungary, plc.

Statistics Reveal 130,000 Unemployed

AU2803104691 Budapest MTI in English 0939 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Text] Budapest, 26 Mar (MTI)—The number of unemployed in Hungary reached 130,000 by the end of February, about 2.5 per cent of the total workforce, the latest statistical report reveals.

This is a sharp increase on the 82,000 who were unemployed at the end of last year, and 100,000 at the end of January.

Unemployment was only 23,000 at the end of January 1990.

At the end of February 1991, 102,000 people received unemployment benefit. An unemployed person receives 70 per cent of the previous year's salary in the first year out of work and 50 per cent in the second year. Two years is the maximum period during which unemployment benefit is paid, provided the recipient has worked for at least four years before he becomes unemployed.

Finance Minister on Economic Links With Soviets

LD2803094291 Budapest Domestic Service in Hungarian 0600 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Interview with Finance Minister Mihaly Kupa by Peter Szoerenyi; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Szoerenyi] Finance Minister Mihaly Kupa is to begin discussions in the Soviet Union.

[Kupa] The aim is to settle the difficulties that had arisen in our trading relations.

[Szoerenyi] Is it possible?

[Kupa] I am sure this is possible.

[Szoerenyi] Everyone is saying that the Soviet partner is unable to pay rather than unwilling.

[Kupa] I regard it as a very good omen that they are opening a $150 million credit. I trust that we have mutual interests. The Soviet Union is an enormous market; it is in our interest, in the long run, that foreign investors should also come here because we, as guides, could help in the relations with the Soviets. I hope we will find the common coffer into which we both will be willing to contribute certain interest or funds.

Government Holds Position on Troop Withdrawal

LD2703193191 Warsaw PAP in English 1729 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Warsaw, March 27—A government commission for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland at its meeting here today positively evaluated the results of the 5th round of negotiations held on March 19-20 in Moscow.

Poland did not change its position that the transit of Soviet troops going home from Germany via the Polish territory is possible only when there exists a Polish-Soviet agreement on the withdrawal of Soviet troops stationed in Poland and a transit agreement.

Soviets Agree to Inspection of Buildings

LD2703215891 Warsaw TVP Television Network in Polish 2055 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Representatives of Poland and the Soviet Union have held talks concerning the inspection of buildings used by Soviet troops in Poland. The inspections are to ascertain that nuclear arms were not being stored in Poland. General Dubynin reported officially on the agreement of the Soviet Government to such inspections being conducted.

Skubiszewski on Walesa's U.S. Visit, Relations

AU2703151691 Warsaw RZECZPOSPOLITA in Polish 25 Mar 91 pp 1,7

[Interview with Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski by Ryszard Malik, place and date not given: "Friendship and Hope"]

[Text] [Malik] The official part of the Polish president's U.S. visit has impressed people as very successful and, at the same time, businesslike. Is that a correct impression?

[Skubiszewski] It is not just an impression, it is a fact. President Lech Walesa was received in Washington with friendship and hope. This attitude was clearly illustrated by the Senate's resolution of 21 March, which welcomed President Walesa. Its adoption was immediately followed by a discussion with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a successful meeting with leading senators.

And now for the results you ask about.

Above all, a Polish-American declaration was signed. Normally, the United States does not conclude documents like this. The very fact that both presidents concluded it on 20 March shows the support Poland has and the importance that the United States attaches to relations with us. The declaration has confirmed that both countries are united by a desire to maintain stability and security in Europe and act for the sake of a further consolidation of European peace. The declaration stresses that "The United States attaches great importance to a consolidation and guarantee of the security and independence of Poland, considering this to be essential to a new, indivisible, and free Europe." These words provide political directives that are necessary to stabilize our position and pursue a joint Polish-American policy in Europe. I discussed with Secretary of State James Baker the concrete moves that should be made in the CSCE political sphere following the Paris summit. The U.S. Senate conformed its strong support for Poland's independence and security. In particular, please note the word security —it refers to a central problem in our politics.

One of the issues touched upon by our American interlocutors was the withdrawal of the Soviet forces in Poland. The United States supports our aim to resolve this issue. It sees major prospects for a further expansion of Poland's role in Europe, including in this region, especially as far as encouraging stability in this part of Europe is concerned. We presented our vision of general and regional European security. It was necessary to do so, for there are major possibilities for Polish-American cooperation in this sphere. After all, Poland consistently appreciates the importance of a transatlantic component in European politics.

As we know, security possesses an economic dimension. President Bush exceeded the Paris Club's 50 percent reduction in Poland's foreign debts, and erased 70 percent of Poland's debts to the United States. In this way, President Bush showed other creditor countries the path that has to be followed in the difficult bilateral talks in store for Poland on the subject of further reductions. This is still important, considering the fact that until recently, some governments were still resisting any reduction in Poland's debts.

President Bush also presented other economic initiatives. Within the next two years, a fund consisting of about $45 million could facilitate the involvement of American enterprises in Poland. He also presented the possibility of customs concessions concerning our exports. He announced help in reducing the trade barriers.

The President's commitment to Poland and its basic interests was striking.

Prospects of closer and better economic cooperation are opening up. One can already say that there is a possibility of increasing exports of our textiles and steel. A mission sent by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Mosbacher will visit Poland soon. The Polish president's meeting with businessmen in New York on 26 March will be very important. During his official visit to Washington, Lech Walesa strongly encouraged the Americans to invest in Poland, and presented good prospects for investments.

Thanks to the president's visit, Polish-American relations have entered a new era of cooperation and partnership. Poland is still in need of this in the present situation in Central and Eastern Europe. There is no doubt that the visit is a success.

[Malik] Washington, and President George Bush personally, are doing a lot for Poland and wish to continue to do so. Why is the Americans' attitude toward our country and our problems the way it is, instead of something different? Do they want anything in return?

[Skubiszewski] The United States can see very well what Poland's foreign policy is. Our policy combines a firm defense of imponderables with realism and flexibility. There is no fluctuation and rapidly deflating emotion in our policy, and no adventurism. Instead, there is professionalism, without which there is no question of any politics. Very much has been achieved in the sphere of democratization and the introduction of a free market economy. All this is making us a U.S. partner in Atlantic-European politics, which well serves the unity of our continent and good U.S.-USSR cooperation, which is so important. We are expected to continue the intelligent, calm politics we have been pursuing so far, which help create a new European and world order based on peace, respect for law and human dignity, and a healthy working economy.

Debt Reduction Increasing 'Creditors' Confidence'

LD2703225491 Warsaw PAP in English 2143 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Warsaw, March 27—Thanks to the agreement with the Paris Club on the debt reduction, creditors' confidence in Poland's solvency is now greater, Jan Boniuk and Lodzimierz Kasprzak of Poland's Finance Ministry told PAP today. It can be expected that Poland's partners from the London Club will conclude that the conditions of a future agreeement (with Poland) should not substantially differ from the terms of the agreement reached with the Paris Club. It can be expected that an accord with commercial banks will be concluded still this year.

In result of the agreements with creditor nations and banks the annual rate of servicing the debt will not exceed 15 per cent of the value of Poland's yearly export which means that this country will be able to currently clear its financial obligations, the officials said. As concerns Poland's debt owed to the USSR, preparations for the second round of talks are still under way. The Polish side is of the opinion that the debt should be discussed in the context of Poland's surplus in trade with the Soviet Union.

The agreement with the Paris Club on the reduction of Poland's debt will change completely Poland's situation. The agreement to be officially signed on April 19 provides for at least 50 per cent cut in Poland's debt and the conversion of another 10 per cent into zlotys with the allocation for ecological projects or other purposes to be agreed upon by both sides. Under individual agreements, the level of reduction can be higher, as evidenced by the U.S. declaration on the remittance of 70 per cent of Poland's debt.

Due to the remittance of 80 per cent of interests owed to the Paris Club over the next three years, the servicing of the debt will cost Poland some 600 million dollars annually thus restoring Poland's solvency and financial liquidity, the two officials said.

Romania's Nastase Arrives, Meets Skubiszewski

LD2703202591 Warsaw PAP in English 1730 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Warsaw, March 27—Romanian Foreign Minister Adrian Nastase arrived in Poland for an official visit today in the afternoon.

Nastase met with Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski in his office here to discuss the condition of bilateral relations and European cooperation.

Cooperation Agreement Signed

LD2803064791 Warsaw Domestic Service in Polish 2100 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] The foreign ministers of Romania and Poland, Adrian Nastase and Krzysztof Skubiszewski respectively, discussed contents of the new Polish-Romanian treaty of cooperation. Skubiszewski said he was interested in the treaty between Romania and the Soviet Union, the progress of negotiations in this matter, and especially sessions which concern security. A program of cultural and scientific cooperation between Poland and Romania for the years 1991-1993 was signed.

PZPR Asset Liquidator Appointed

AU2803083591 Warsaw GAZETA WYBORCZA in Polish 25 Mar 91 p 2

[Unsigned report: "The PZPR Asset Liquidator]

[Text] Jozef Palinko, a researcher at the Main School of Planning and Statistics and a specialist in commercial law, has been appointed liquidator of the assets of the former Polish United Workers Party [PZPR]. He was appointed to the post by Minister Krzysztof J. Zabinski, head of the Office of the Council of Ministers.

The job of the liquidator is to assess, maintain, and define the value of assets that were taken over by the state treasury on the basis of the 9 November 1990 act on transferring ownership of former PZPR assets.

The act has been signed by President Lech Walesa and appeared in the DZIENNIK USTAW No. 16, dated 27 February 1991.

Police Union Congress Approves Protest Action

AU2803082291 Warsaw GAZETA WYBORCZA in Polish 25 Mar 91 p 1

['bad'-signed report: "Either the Minister or the Police"]

[Text] The Extraordinary Congress of the Police Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union, which was held in Szczytno from 22 through 23 March, announced the nationwide staging of protest actions. Delegates declared the union to be engaged in a collective dispute with the ministry.

The police are demanding wages that would be 2.4 times higher than the average wage for the five basic sectors of the economy. They reject the proposed new pension act that would deprive them of the right to a pension after 15 years' service. They also reject the ban on strike action by police force employees, contained in the draft law on collective disputes.

If the minister of internal affairs does not start talks with the union by 8 April, policemen will launch a warning action in the form of a march through Warsaw ending at the Belweder Palace, where they will deliver a petition to the president.

The next step (which would include displaying protest statements and slogans at police stations and on police vehicles) is to be a nationwide protest action scheduled for 15 April.

Professor Jan Widacki, deputy minister of internal affairs, attended the congress and sought to convince unionists that it was not Henryk Majewski, the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who was opposed to meeting their wage demands, but Leszek Balcerowicz.

Asked by GAZETA what the police would do if their minister proves to be intransigent, the chairman of the union negotiating commission replied: "He will have to go. Preparations for the papal visit will begin in April. We will continue with our protest actions until we succeed."

Prime Minister Bielecki Tours Silesia Colliery

LD2803060391 Warsaw PAP in English 2237 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Katowice, March 27— Premier Jan Krzysztof Bielecki today started his two-day-visit to Silesia, Poland's most industrialized and most polluted region.

Bielecki toured "Slask" colliery in Ruda Slaska, paid tribute to the miners killed in the "Wujek" coal mine soon after the introduction of martial law in 1981, and held meetings with members of the Solidarity trade unions, scientists and rectors of Silesian schools of higher education.

At the meeting with delegates of solidarity, the premier said that during the next two or three weeks the government would present its proposals concerning the restructuring of the mining industry.

While answering one of the questions, Bielecki said that Poland intended to gradually withdraw from the export of coal due to the expected drop in the prices of oil and coal. "Polish coal mines will no longer be competitive. Coal will become an element of Poland's fuel security rather than a standard export commodity," the premier said.

In the evening the premier met also with some 100 businessmen, executives of state-owned enterprises, bankers, representatives of foreign trade agencies and business chambers.

Referring to the reduction of Poland's foreign debt and this country's restored creditworthiness, the premier said that Poland was again in the focus of interest of foreign investors, especially small ones.

The premier got acquainted with the concept of the 2nd Silesian economic forum to be held on April 5-6.

State TV To Work With Baltics on Programming

LD2803115291 Warsaw PAP in English 1044 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] Warsaw, March 28—A 3-day meeting at Serock near Warsaw of the heads of television from Poland and the three Baltic republics resulted in two important decisions. The four TV organizations are to initiate a joint project to cooperate in joint TV programme production, and Polish TV (TVP) is to extend its assistance for Lithuania in the production of Polish-language programmes. The recent unrest in Vilnius led to a temporary suspension in broadcasting programmes from TVP, and when broadcasting was resumed, the programmes were subject to censorship by the Soviet authorities. Polish TV can be received by 60 percent of Lithuanians. The management of independent Lithuanian TV (the official network being controlled by the Soviet authorities) has set its hopes on the planned launch of a new transmitter at Suwalki, which will allow Lithuanians to receive transmissions of Poland's second TV channel. Around 60,000 Poles live in Latvia, and thus Latvian TV is also interested in receiving Polish broadcasts, which will require further technical preparations. The Latvian visitors also intend to benefit from the Polish experience in the area of TV reforms.

FSN Held Responsible for 'Disastrous' Situation

AU2703153191 Bucharest DREPTATEA in Romanian 23 Mar 91 pp 1, 3

[Dora Mezdrea article: "A Future for Romania?—Without History, Without Memory, Without God?"]

[Excerpts] Is such a future for Romania possible? The recent National Convention of the National Salvation Front [FSN] under the motto "A Future for Romania" wanted to demonstrate that there is such a future. It tried to create the impression that the FSN is the only possible future for our country, that it is possible and necessary: "The National Convention can and must convey to the country the image of a cohesive (?) and united formation, capable of further assuming responsibility for the country's affairs," said Petre Roman. The affirmation that "it has assumed responsibility so far" is a lie of omission. Prime Minister Roman did not specify and would never admit that the FSN also has to assume responsibility for the disaster in our country, which, to a great extent, is also due to the fact that, in any case, it denied the access of any political formation to responsibility.

What was most amazing at the recent FSN National Convention was the fact that the FSN is a formation that denies history. It denies history as a link with the immediate present, with concrete situations, and as a comparison with another model in our history, because it does not recognize the link with Ceausescu's time or with our more distant past history. From this point of view social-democracy represents a sweet illusion of the FSN. The FSN denies history even in a more dangerous way: It not only denies tradition but also memory. For the FSN our history begins with the history of the FSN. It denies the tradition it does not own anyway; our history begins with the FSN, and without the FSN we are nothing. This is a nonsensical idea generated by a deep-rooted mythomania that recognizes and develops solely what it believes has been done well. [passage omitted]

The true scope of the FSN's tremendous loss of voters, which is obvious for everyone, is difficult to assess. One thing is sure: The FSN was able to rally some 1,000 members at the recent National Convention. [passage omitted]

Here are some of the more important aspects of the Conventions:

1. Lack of organizational strictness.

2. A split in the FSN, which has not been admitted as such, but has been denied although the split was obvious from what numerous speakers said.

3. The FSN's totalitarian conduct through identifying the government, party, and president with each other and through plans to preserve power for an unlimited time.

As for the lack of organizational strictness, Mr. Petre Roman has constantly tried to give the impression of a convention organized on democratic bases. [passage omitted]

As for the split in the FSN, it was actually recognized but shrugged off as insignificant by Prime Minister Roman, "in absolute terms one can talk about a split. If one bears in mind that of the total of 1,046 votes only 58 voted against the motion, then I believe it is insignificant." [passage omitted]

As for the FSN's totalitarian conduct, this is obvious even if we refer only to the formula "Front—ruling party" which was mentioned as such by all those who took the floor.

Labor Minister Defends Price Liberalization

AU2803125191 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1045 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest ROMPRES, 28/3/1991—"Our enterprises fail to revamp the products and technological processes so as to make them remunerative. By protecting them excessively one can only encourage laziness," highlights Catalin Zamfir, minister of labour and social protection, in an interview with daily ADEVARUL, referring to price liberalization and social protection.

In the same interview, the minister assesses that some claims in connection with social protection pursue to avoid the crisis that generates change, pursue to maintain indefinitely a number of poorly organized enterprises full of conflicts, where all forces block one another waiting for miracles.

"I am amazed," he said, "that many social forces demand even the halting of the reform. This actually means that the current economic crisis will go on and we will fall ever faster and ever lower."

Touching questions of the second stage of price thaw, Catalin Zamfir stressed that both the general algorithm and the principles, the way of enforcement, and the manner of compensation and indexation are so articulated "as to integrally preserve the purchasing capacity of bare necessities for a decent living. The compensation and indexation are integral at the level of basic consumption, but no indexation is ensured for luxury consumption."

Referring to the dialogue with the trade unions on price liberalization and social protection measures, Catalin Zamfir shows that many of the unions have understood the necessity of an active policy in this domain and he feels "they sustain it in a responsible manner." "The unions," he said, "were able to see the realism of our strategy. Now they have to honestly and openly admit it to those whom they represent and clearly explain to them that the government option is objectively necessary for the course of the reform".

Opposition Calls For Price Liberalization Delay

AU2703192891 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1807 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest, ROMPRES, 27/3/1991—The National Liberal Party, the National Peasant (Christian-Democratic) Party and the Romanian Ecological Party disapprove the government's decision to start the second price liberalization stage so much more that it applies to the basic products, the foodstuffs included.

In a statement sent to the ROMPRES national news agency the respective parties show that, because of its faulty application, the price liberalization process changed into a mere increase of prices, taking into consideration the fact that now the conditions are not in place for a good functioning of the mechanisms characteristic for the free market.

The aforementioned opposition parties require the government to postpone the application of the second price liberalization stage and to adopt urgently the priority measures needed for a real and viable reform of the national economy.

Joint Government, TU Meeting Held on Prices

AU2703192691 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1742 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest, ROMPRES, 27/3/1991—On Wednesday [27 March] a new session of the Joint Government-Trade Unions Commission was held at the Government's Headquarters when the grounds and the draft government's resolution were presented in connection with the second price and tariffs liberalization stage due to start on April 1, 1991.

During the session, the representatives of ministries and central bodies answered to the questions put by the Trade Unions Confederation during the previous session concerning the granting of facilities in credits, income and profit tax, unfreezing the pays in the economy.

Roman Discusses Economic Issues at Weekly Meeting

AU2703213291 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 2031 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest, ROMPRES, 27/3/1991—The government's weekly meeting headed by Prime Minister Petre Roman was held on Wednesday, March 27.

The government listened to the account presented by Satu Mare county prefect on that county's economic and social situation as well as on the way in which the measures to fulfil the government's reform programme were applied.

The government was also informed about the recent round of negotiations with the representatives of the International Monetary Fund over March 18-22.

The final form was approved of the government's resolutions concerning the second price and tariffs liberalization stage and the indexation and compensation of salaries and social ensurance, military, war invalids, orphans and widows pensions and other social security measures, respectively.

The government approved to be submitted to Parliament the bills on ratification of the protocol concerning the termination of the military agreements concluded within the Warsaw Treaty and the liquidation of its military bodies and structures, signed in Budapest on February 25, 1991; Romania's adherence to the convention to reprimand illicit acts against the sea navigation safety as well as the protocol to reprimand the illicit acts against the safety of the off-shore drilling rigs, adopted in Rome on March 10, 1988; the ratification of the agreement on the promotion and mutual protection of investments between Romania's and Turkey's governments as well as other bilateral economic agreements.

The protocols of the Joint Governmental Commissions of Economic and Technical-Scientific Collaboration with Pakistan and the Netherlands were also approved.

The government approved the decisions for the setting up of commercial companies in industry, public works, research and design.

The government approved the decision concerning the setting up, organization and functioning of the government's control department.

Minister Vatasescu Reiterates Desire To Resign

AU2603180491 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1708 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Report on interview with Minister Without Portfolio Anton Vatasescu by unidentified reporter; place and date not given: "We Are Not A Second Front in the Cabinet"]

[Text] Bucharest ROMPRES, 26/3/1991—Anton Vatasescu's recent offer to resign his government office was not prompted by political reasons. He wanted to quit not only "to make room for younger people" but also because he could no longer stand "the government's treatment at the hands of the street and the press," he told daily ADEVARUL in an interview.

Anton Vatasescu, minister of state for industry and trade, offered his resignation about two months ago when it was not accepted. Trying to explain his move, Mr. Vatasescu said it was not a political maneuvre, adding that he did not want to create a second front in the cabinet together with Finance Minister Stolojan. "Personally," he said, "I cannot agree with some particulars of this price liberalisation stage, although I agree with it as a whole. At this point, a decision cannot be made on economic grounds only" he showed, adding that "this liberalisation is not a final step" and that in a few months' time it could get out of control.

Showing that he had thought younger people could take his place, he added that other than economic reasons had prompted him to offer his resignation, namely the way the government was treated by the street and the press. "We have been working for 12-14 hours a day, Saturdays and Sundays included, and here they come five hundred people or so shouting under the windows of the government headquarters "rats, assassins." "Well" said Mr. Vatasescu, "I am not prepared to take this any more."

Telling both ADEVARUL and LIBERTATEA newspapers that he was determined to quit, Mr. Vatasescu said nevertheless that he would continue for some time to team up with Finance Minister Stolojan and Resources Minister Zisu, but that "nothing and nobody will ever be able" to make him break with the people he had been working with or with his achievements.

As for the future, he announced his plans "to go private," that is to open, jointly with a few friends, an economic and legal consulting office for foreign businessmen and investors in Romania.

Christian Republican Party Issues Communique

AU2703205191 Bucharest DREPTATEA in Romanian 20 Mar 91 p 2

[Communique issued by the leadership of the Christian Republican Party of Romania; place and date not given]

[Text] The Roman government dismantled the County Provisional Councils of National Unity—pluralist local bodies—and replaced the mayors favored by the people with mayors and prefects appointed by the government, representatives of the totalitarian party.

Through this action, the program of the antitotalitarian 1989 December revolution, which included the stipulation on "abandoning the leading role of a single party," was violated.

Some of the appointed mayors and prefects have abused their positions, as well as misused their influence, without being punished and those who appointed them did not even think of demoting their favorites.

Because of a climate of terror and a mania of secrecy in certain local administrative units and because of the obstruction of the independent press, many violations are not yet under legal or public investigation.

One notices that the trust of the electorate in the totalitarian government—which is corrupt and bureaucratic and succeeded in disorganizing the national economy and caused mass unemployment and inflation—is vanishing.

One can see the tendency of the party and of the totalitarian government to delay the local elections to distribute the national wealth, favoring their political clientele.

In view of the coming implementation of the land law and the endorsement of the law on extensive privatization, it is necessary to have elected local bodies and a dynamic, competent, and honest local administration.

We believe that only those who are elected by the people have the right to occupy positions of prefect, mayor, and other such positions.

We call on the Parliament to urgently set the date for local elections, adopt the appropriate law, and find ways to withdraw the appointment of those who violate moral and civic laws.

We advise all citizens of the country to resolutely choose between prosperity and communism, between freedom and terror, between belief and atheism, and between democracy and abuses.

The Leadership of the Christian Republican Party of Romania

Government Spokesman Discusses Country's Future

AU2603220291 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1910 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest ROMPRES, 26/3/1991—In a press conference held in Bucharest today, Bogdan Baltazar, the government's spokesman, underscored the Romanian Government's concern over the country's immediate and perspective future by setting contracts, cooperation and bilateral agreements in the military field. Underscoring that it "fully corresponds to the consensus expressed in the declaration adopted by the countries former Warsaw Treaty members on the meeting in Hungary's capital city on February 25," the spokesman referred to "the demarches between Romania's and Hungary's relevant ministries which had preceded and led to the signing, last November, of a bilateral collaboration agreement." "Neither when the Warsaw Treaty was still in force in the post-revolution period," Mr. Bogdan Baltazar stated "did Romania neglect for any moment its relations of collaboration with various armed forces and it intends to achieve an even better collaboration in future. It is in this context that fall the demarches now in an advanced stage with Great Britain and we appreciate that the recent collaboration occasioned by the presence in the Gulf area of the Romanian field hospital represented an important step in deepening these relations. Romania has also established contacts in view of cooperation actions with France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, USSR, Czechoslovakia, Indonesia."

Speaking at the weekly press conference given by the government's spokesman, Eugen Dijmarescu, minister of state for economic guidance, showed that in analysing the variants for the second price liberalisation stage, the government had chosen the one that addressed three big demands, namely to balance the market, to give social

protection and maintain the living standard, and to put the Romanian economy on the road to growth.

In maintaining subsidies for imported raw materials, electricity and basic foods, both the general economic interest and the living standard played a part, he said. He was optimistic about the IMF standby credit the importance of which is crucial for the Romanian economy.

On the price of electricity supplied to the population, he said it would remain unchanged this year, as originally planned.

In another line of ideas, Minister Dijmarescu said that in 1990 food was not exported on an organised basis, with the exception of certain quantities of sheep meat. However, in 1991, when about 80 per cent of the farmers become private producers, one cannot dismiss the idea that they may export in order to buy what they need. "However, the state has no commitments in that respect for this year," he said.

Under a decision of the Government of Romania, the state guarantees prices for a specified number of farm products, government spokesman Bogdan Baltazar told the weekly press conference. Outside this list, prices will be set through negotiations among economic agents. The decision was made with a view to raising the contract an acquisition prices of the principal plant crops, for which about 32 billion lei were earmarked by the state and of which farmers concluding contracts with the state can take advantage of.

Bishop Tokes: Fight for Democracy Must Continue

AU2703091891 Vienna ORF Television Network in German 2105 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Interview with Bishop Laszlo Tokes by Robert Hochner in the ORF studio in Vienna—live; answers by Tokes in Hungarian with simultaneous German translation]

[Text] [Hochner] Good evening, Bishop Tokes.

[Tokes] Good evening.

[Hochner] Bishop, when the revolution started, you certainly had big goals for your country—freedom and democracy. If you look at your country today, which of these goals has been achieved?

[Tokes] Even defining terms is a problem, because it has become clear that this was not quite a revolution, but a takeover of power by the second echelon. Those who took over power from the Ceausescu clan do not want real democracy. The nomenklatura and the Securitate have remained in their key positions. Either nothing has happened or things have developed backward again. We have experienced a big disappointment about what happened, but one will not be able to turn back what has been started.

[Hochner] This means, Bishop, that your struggle and the struggle of all those who want democracy and freedom in Romania against the Securitate, for instance, continues?

[Tokes] Yes. We must be very realistic, but I also feel that I am a believer [as heard]. We must live with reality and we must pursue the struggle we are facing. The big advantage is that we were helpless victims in the past, while now we are able to struggle for our future.

[Hochner] Bishop, the pictures that came from Romania after the revolution showed alarming poverty. Even before that, there had been reports about food shortages. Has this at least changed as a result of the revolution and subsequent developments?

[Tokes] Unfortunately, sometimes I do not know whether I should complain because of my nationality or because of my citizenship. We have a crisis at every level and in every sphere. The general supply situation is disastrous. We have neither money nor goods to buy with money. Poverty—one can even say misery—is threatening the country.

[Hochner] Bishop, the political and economic situation in your country is still characterized to a certain extent by the Ceausescu regime and its successors. What kind of help from abroad would be most important for your country now?

[Tokes] Even just moral help by the West is very valuable, particularly if it is combined with political aid. Unfortunately, the West still does not understand, is unable to grasp what is going on in our country. Your country, Austria, for instance, is an exception in this case, because you know what occupation means. After all, you were under Soviet occupation. You can also help a lot with this interview—by making things public, by giving the resistance an opportunity to speak out. On the other hand, economic aid linked to certain conditions is very important. I highly recomend that you be aware of the fact that it is necessary not just to help all the refugees—not only them—but those who stayed at home, so Europe will not lose its balance when everyone starts moving. Let us cure the European area, and we thank everybody who is helping us do that.

[Hochner] Bishop, thank you very much for this interview and all the best for the future.

[Tokes] Thank you, thank you.

Calls For 'National Reconciliation'

AU2703133391 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1237 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest, ROMPRES 27/3/1991—"In this period of transition to a world which, I hope will be quite different, to a really democratic society, many Hungarians have fled Romania and they must understand that this people is not the Hungarians' enemy, nor are the

Hungarians the Romanians' enemies," states Bishop Laszlo Tokes in an interview with ROMPRES.

"We will not find our future to the detriment of the others," he says, "but it is only together that we will be able to do everything. My preach journeys are designed as an encouragement of the reformed Hungarian Church, of my Hungarians. On the other hand, they are a campaign, a mission, so to say, for national reconciliation."

"All Romanians who do not let themselves influenced in the negative by extremist circles, should further unite with those of the Hungarians who want reconciliation and, far from any separatism, exclusivism and extremism, they should work for this country's good and prosperity," opines Bishop Tokes.

"On the other hand," he says, "I am the honorary chairman of the UDMR [Democratic Association of Hungarians in Romania]." I am bound to participate in its policy, I am a representative of the Church. I am often invited abroad. I also preach. Sermons have had a great role in Timisoara as well. By spreading God's word I have managed to bear great positive influence on the believers. I want to go on with this mission.

"I feel estranged," Bishop Tokes says. "And this, because of the Romanian extremism which is now characteristic of the Romanian society unfortunately more than reconciliation and democracy. But I think the democracy-oriented Romanians too, feel estranged from the present-day society."

International Symposium Adopts Declaration

AU2703220191 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 2047 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest, ROMPRES, 27/3/1991—An international symposium with the theme "Power and Opposition in Post-Communist Societies, Bases for Pluralism in Central and Eastern Europe" concluded in Timisoara today.

A declaration was adopted which was signed by the Union of Democratic Forces in Bulgaria, the Civic Alliance in Romania, the Free Democrats' Alliance in Hungary, the Social Democratic League in Yugoslavia, Charter '77 in Czechoslovakia, the Social Democratic Party in the Republic of Moldova.

"The democratic forces gathered in Timisoara to know each other and to confess friendly their victories and failures declare themselves morally solid in their efforts to reinstate democracy and political pluralism in Central and Eastern Europe," the declaration reads inter alia.

Nastase Makes Statement Before Leaving for Poland

AU2703192291 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1744 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest, ROMPRES, 27/3/1991—Romania's Foreign Affairs Minister Adrian Nastase left for Poland on Wednesday [27 March] for a visit at the invitation of that country's foreign minister Krysztof Skubiszewski.

In a statement to the press Mr. Adrian Nastase stressed that the visit proved Romania's concerns to consolidate its relations with the East and Central European countries, with its neighbors in the first place. Anyhow, we try to pay greater attention to the countries in our vicinity and as far as Poland is concerned I could say that it is a country which, from a sentimental and historical point of view, is a partner, a friend, Mr. Nastase said. Therefore I think that the visit is important since our countries face difficulties and each of us is trying to assume a certain identity in European construction. Direct contacts are, probably, the only modality of understanding each other better and of developing bilateral cooperation in various areas, he further said, adding: the programme of the visit includes talks at Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A programme of cultural cooperation will be signed and there will be meetings with parliament representatives. Calls at higher levels are also in view. There are numerous questions we might approach as well as the way in which we see European construction, in which we want to set our foreign policy priorities, beyond the bilateral dimension of our relations, the Romanian minister said in conclusion.

Foreign Affairs, RMDSZ Officials on Pentagonal

AU2603185591 Budapest NEPSZABADSAG in Hungarian 21 Mar 91 p 3

[Interview with Ioan Mircea Pascu, chief foreign affairs adviser to the Romanian president, and Geza Szocs, general secretary of the Democratic Association of Hungarians in Romania, by Peter Mag; in Bucharest; date not given: "Bucharest Regards Pentagonale as a Threat"—first paragraph is NEPSZABADSAG introduction]

[Text] Joan Mircea Pascu gave an interview to NEPSZABADSAG in connection with the foreign policy articles of the recent program of the National Salvation Front [FSN] adopted at the FSN national conference.

[Pascu] In our opinion, the appearance of various structures similar to the Pentagonale and the trilateral cooperation is an attempt to replace the former multinational organization in Eastern Europe, like the Warsaw Pact and CEMA. To a certain extent, the new structures express their members' intention to cooperate, mainly in political and economic areas now, and less in the military areas. At the same time, these new structures have appeared to fill the power void that is emerging in this

area in the wake of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. Our future partly depends on the new geopolitical situation that will emerge in Europe when Germany really rules the continent. Our future also depends on the future relations between these blocs and the other European or Western organizations.

As for us Romanians, we would not like these structures to become an obstacle hindering our relations with other areas in Europe. Therefore, we are ready to participate in these organizations and thus create contacts with the cooperation structures in the Balkans. The idea is to create, or revive a buffer country to fill the power vacuum in the area or to prevent this void from increasing. The Austro-Hungarian monarchy played a similar role in the area in the past. All the movements that first started in the areas of arts and culture for a so-called Mitteleuropa in the beginning of the eighties received political dimensions within a few years.

[Szocs] To regard such an initiative aimed at integration and rapprochement—which is nothing more than a loose coordination of similar efforts so far—as the roots of a possible aggression against anyone (or a pact serving such an aggression) is a sign of a true political ignorance.

Foreign Minister on One People, Two States

AU2703132191 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1156 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest, ROMPRES 27/3/1991—The treaty recently concluded in Moscow has meant the revamping of the normative framework of Romania's political relations with the Soviet Union, prompted by the wish to leave behind the coercion of military alliance, plus the wish to record in such a document the European values and the political changes in Europe," stresses Romanian Foreign Minister Adrian Nastase in a statement to daily ADEVARUL. "The treaty records the same elements, values, principles that can be found in the USSR's treaties with France, Germany, Italy. They are principles extant in the relations between two states observing equality and sovereignty."

Referring to his visit in Chisinau [Kishinev], Minister Nastase showed that Bessarabia's issue "should not be viewed in an egotistic manner, from our angle only, from the angle of what we think Moldova is, what we think Moldova wishes. A concrete strategy has to be articulated, that should not account for a deepening of diverging political lines." In Chisinau, Minister Nastase mentions "they expressed to me the wish for independence as a result of a gradual process. It is important that we should pass from maybe preconceived ideas ... to assessing an actual fact—the existence of one Romanian people, of two Romanian states that develop and assert their sovereignty in specific forms. This clarification," Nastase added, "is of outstanding value: All options are possible sometime in future, taking account of the human, political resources, of the European construction as a whole."

For the time being, Nastase opined, "we should operate with what is possible, which means the economic and cultural interrelation." "We should be pragmatic, not indulge in an emotional approach: The observance of frontiers, territorial integrity are standards associated with a certain political philosophy of Europe," the Romanian foreign minister highlighted, adding: "We wish a wise policy that should no longer mortgage the future and that should take account of present realities."

Iasi Rally Marks Bessarabian Union Anniversary

AU2703213391 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 2024 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest, ROMPRES, 27/3/1991—On Wednesday [27 March] a civic rally took place in Iasi on the occasion of the anniversary of 73 years from Bessarabia's union with Romania.

The speakers referred to the tormented history of the Romanians across the Prut under the long Czarist and Stalinist occupation, to the nefarious consequences of the imperial annexation policy, appreciating positively the demarches and actions undertaken by the Moldovan Parliament and Government to uphold the ideals of real independence and sovereignty, to maintain the national being.

USSR Reportage on Nastase Visit

WA2703125291

For USSR reportage on Foreign Minister Adrian Nastase's visit to the USSR, including talks with Soviet Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh, see the East Europe sections of the 22 and 25 March Soviet Union DAILY REPORT. For Nastase's visit to the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic, including talks with Moldovan Foreign Minister Nicolae Tiu, see the Western Republics sections of the 26 and 27 March Soviet Union DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Presidency Talks 'Peaceful, Tolerant'

LD2703220991 Zagreb Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 2100 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] The SFRY Presidency met twice in Belgrade today. The first time it was a working meeting and afterward a regular session. The morning meeting was devoted to a discussion on the dismissal of Kosovo representative Riza Sapundziju and the resignation and reinstatement of Borisav Jovic. During the regular session the members of the state Presidency examined the security and political situation in the country.

The working session was attended by the representatives of all republics and provinces. A bitter discussion was held regarding Sapundziju's dismissal, and according to reliable sources, the outcome of the discussion was four against four. No conclusions were therefore adopted by those attending the session and the decision was held pending action by the Yugoslav Constitutional Court. At the same time, the behavior and statements of President Borisav Jovic were strongly criticized concerning his public resignation from the membership (of the SFRY Presidency) and the post of presiding over the political leadership.

Discussing the political and security situation during the regular session today, the Presidency decided that no conclusions should be passed on this subject either. This discussion will be resumed at the future sessions, however, within the framework of preparations of the announced session on the same subject in the federal legislature.

We have learned from circles close the SFRY Presidency that today's session was marked by peaceful and tolerant discussions.

Jovic Views Decisionmaking Process, Resignation

LD2703224991 Belgrade TANJUG in English 2020 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Belgrade, March 27 (TANJUG)—President of the Yugoslav State Presidency Borisav Jovic says in an interview to the Belgrade daily VECERNJE NOVOSTI that "there is a tendency to exclude federal institutons from the decisionmaking process concerning the country's future."

The federation cannot be forced out of the talks (on the country's future), says Jovic in the interview which the high-circulation daily publishes in its issue for tomorrow. Talks of the presidents of Yugoslavia's six republics, which open in the central Adriatic town of Split tomorrow, can be viewed "as a favourable form of frank talks which can move things from the stand-still", he adds.

Jovic says that he would not, under any circumstances, renounce the demand that the future common Yugoslav state should be regarded as one single subject of international law with civil rights for all, that it have a single market and currency, one army and the right to exercise those functions directly.

Commenting on the resignation he tendered to the post of "first among equals" in the collective head of state earlier this month and which the Assembly of Serbia has rejected, Jovic says that "this was the only thing to do at the time". Jovic views Vice-President Stipe Mesic's insistence that the Presidency discuss the resignation as an attempt to remove him fom office.

Under the Yugoslav Constitution, the resignation of a member of the State Presidency is decided in the parliament of the republic which delegated him.

Commenting on some harsh assessments of the work of the federal government, which he voiced in his resignation speech, Jovic says that some of his assessments were seconded by the Presidency itself. "I proposed to federal Prime Minister Ante Markovic to move in the federal parliament for a vote of confidence in the government", says Jovic.

Jovic says that the demonstrations held in Belgrade earlier this month and during which he tendered his resignation "might be useful... If they served the purpose of awakening democracy".

Mesic Expects Consensus on Country's Future

LD2703224791 Belgrade TANJUG in English 2031 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Belgrade, March 27 (TANJUG)—Vice-President of the Yugoslav State Presidency Stipe Mesic said in an interview to the U.S. news agency ASSOCIATED PRESS that the Yugoslav republican leaders would reach agreement on the country's future at a series of summits prior to May 15.

Mesic hinted, however, that federal Prime Minister Ante Markovic—whom the agency described as firmly committed to reforms—would have to go before that date.

According to the rotation principle, members of the collective head of state take turns as presidents of this body each May 15. Mesic, who represents the second-biggest republic Croatia, is next to take over as first among equals.

The first summit of Yugoslav republican leaders scheduled for tomorrow in Split will be the "first concrete step" towards agreement on the future of the country, he stressed.

Mesic said there would be only two options in Split—a loose alliance or a break-up—and pointed out that "the federal option will no longer be discussed."

Mesic confirmed that Prime Minister Markovic was under pressure after Monday's "secret meeting" between Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman. "Serbian pressure on Markovic has grown, and I do not know whether he can make it until May 15," he said.

In another interview Mesic said that the "creation of an alliance of sovereign states" in a future Yugoslav community would suit the republics of Macedonia and Croatia most.

He told the weekly PLUS, published in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, that the situation in that republic resembles the one in the northwestern republic of Slovenia, because in both "there is a whole range of people and ideas, and even parties competing with one another in radicalism."

In Slovenia, said Mesic, "this is Demos (the ruling coalition of centrist parties). They compete for getting out of Yugoslavia as soon as possible, instead of finding how to go on more easily together towards a new agreement."

"Reasonable people in Slovenia think in this direction," concluded Mesic, adding: "probpems cannot be settled by getting out Yugoslavia."

Milosevic-Tudjman Hold 'Secret Meeting'

LD2703154791 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1357 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Belgrade, March 27 (TANJUG)—The Yugoslav press today highlights reactions to the secret meeting held the day before yesterday between the leaders of Yugoslavia's largest republics of Serbia and Croatia, Milosevic and Tudjman, respectively, which has been qualified as "sensational."

The daily VECERNJI LIST of Zagreb, Croatia, writes that "the meeting of the two presidents is the most important political act in Yugoslavia since the death of President Tito."

The Zagreb daily sets out that the direct Serbo-Croatian dialogue "without the arbitration of any federal bodies" marks "a new and fundamental step towards a shift to a confederate order or a peaceful separation."

The Zagreb daily VJESNIK also places accent on "the opening of new prospects for a solution in Yugoslavia." It says that the Tudjman-Milosevic meeting marks a step closer to a solution according to which the "Yugoslav Federation would become an association of sovereign states."

As opposed to the Zagreb media, which welcome the establishment of a direct Serbo-Croatian dialogue, the daily DELO of Ljubljana, Slovenia, fears that "some third side" will pay for the Serbo-Croatian accord.

"The third side will again be Slovenia (but also Macedonia, Bosnia-Hercegovina and Kosovo)," DELO writes. It sets out, however, that there is no room for fear, since "in case of a new agreement, Slovenia would surely be assigned to Croatia's sphere of influence, from where it is not far to 'Alps Croatia'."

The federal daily BORBA writes that the scant statement about the Milosevic-Tudjman meeting "opens room for all kinds of speculations about the Serbo-Croatian secret trade."

The daily writes that the Croatian and Serbian party leaders "for the most part condemn secret meetings, and deny their national leaders the right to take crucial decisions on behalf of entire nations outside parliaments and other democratic institutions."

Trying To 'Eliminate' Markovic

LD2803112791 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1032 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] Belgrade, March 28 (Tanjug)—The Belgrade daily BORBA on Thursday writes that the Yugoslavs have "fallen for the tricks of the press" when they believed that the presidents of the Republics of Serbia and Croatia - Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman - hated each other very much.

Commenting [on] the talks between Milosevic and Tudjman last Tuesday, BORBA says that they, "acting together - although seemingly from opposed positions - managed to muster the people behind them, discipline the opposition and thwart the federal Prime Minister Ante Markovic."

The paper cites that Milosevic and Tudjman first eliminated from the decision-making process the parliaments - both the republican and the federal then also the Yugoslav State Presidency, leaving federal Prime Minister Ante Markovic as the sole obstacle in the way of reaching their mutual accord. The reason why the presidents of the two largest Yugoslav republics were trying to "definitively eliminate" Markovic, the paper finds in that the federal Prime Minister insisted on continuing reforms, and this does not suit Milosevic and Tudjman.

To continue reforms, BORBA writes, would mean to "lose [the] power politics has over the economy" and "further create conditions for Yugoslavia to function and survive as a whole, in accordance with [the] interests of its parts."

"The functioning of the system is not in the interests of those who, in order to survive, need constant tension and instability, because they have nothing to do or offer in peace time," the paper notes. The commentator, Mirko Klarin, is one of the leading activists of the Alliance of Reformists Forces of Yugoslavia, the party of Prime Minister Ante Markovic.

Draskovic Replies to Milan Babic Comments

AU2703123791 Belgrade POLITIKA in Serbo-Croatian 23 Mar 91 13

[Unattributed report: "'The Decision on Secession Is Premature'"]

[Text] Serbian Renaissance President Vuk Draskovic has sent a reply to Milan Babic in which he says, among other things:

I have learned from the newspapers that you were embittered by the statement I made at a news conference on 19 March in Belgrade when I called the decision on the secession of several communes in the Knin region from Croatia a "dangerous and premature move" and that you therefore consider me a "power-craving" man and the "illegitimate representative and interpreter of the will of any section of the Serbian people."

Either deliberately or accidentally, you keep quiet about the fact that at that time I also said: "I fully support the secession of the Serbian Autonomous Region of the Krajina from Croatia, if Croatia secedes from Yugoslavia."

At that news conference, I was, dear Mr. Babic, representing the program of the Serbian Renaissance Movement that was written several months before the Serbian Autonomous Region of the Krajina was even set up. This program says that the autonomous area of the Serbian Krajina (or Serbian Krajinas) must be set up on the territory of present day Croatia that will secede from Croatia and become part of the Serbian state if Yugoslavia is confederalized or collapses.

You will admit that Yugoslavia exists, it has not confederalized, and Croatia has not yet seceded. Therefore, the decision on secession was premature.

Belgrade Opposition Meeting Assails Milosevic

LD2703180391 Zagreb Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1600 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Dusko Mandic report on protest meeting organized by Serbian opposition in Belgrade on 27 March]

[Text] About 50,000 people, who did not allow poor weather conditions to prevent them from attending, gathered at Republic Square to hear opposition leaders who, depending on who they were and what they said, received applause of varying duration. Mentions of communism and of Milosevic were always, however, greeted with some intensity of applause.

Vuk Draskovic, the most popular personality of the opposition, who contrary to his custom, spoke at the very beginning of the meeting, applied a great deal of his historical allusions to the present time, ending with a call for the toppling of the current authorities, of Milosevic, and communism. Draskovic said that Serbia no longer wants either Bolshevism or perestroyka but radical changes. Serbia wants independent press and TV, independent judiciary, de- politicized Army and police, free market, private enterprise and a multiparty legislature. Serbia wants to be Europe, and not an embarrassment to Europe. Draskovic added:

[Begin Draskovic recording] [Words indistinct] in the capital of Serbia [loud shouts] who against his people, against his children [shouts of "Red Bandits] unleashed armored vehicles, military brigades [shouts of "Slobo Saddam"] [words indistinct] who shot at Serbia on that day, who on that day committed a fratricide like the one on 7 July 1941. I am afraid of Serbs who subscribe to the idea of permitting of Serbs to kill Serbs who impose the killing of Serbs as a national holiday. Let us go today against that idea. Let us say no to its program, its force [words indistinct]. [indistinct shouts] [end recording]

A government with blood on its hands must resign, Draskovic said. Serbia must be protected from the official Serbia and thus be able to protect Serbs in Knin and elsewher. This was followed by tumultuous shouts "Down with government", "Down with government", "Slobo leave!" a speaker at the rally noted that on 9 March demonstrators roughly charged with their backs into suprised policemen.

Vojislav Kostunica said that if the Serbian Assembly is incapable of tackling problems, then problems will be solved on the streets. He also stressed that St. George's Day is near, referrring to a claim that on that day, 6 April, the communists will be ousted in Serbia. This was followed by shouts of "Red Bandits".

Several speakers recalled secret talks between Milosevic and Tudjman; the increasingly popular Ivan Djuric said that a similar agreement was made 50 years ago, and as the former one did not last, this one too will soon be gone. In exchange, for Ante Markovic's fall, the fate of the Serbs in Knin will be sealed. Only those fearing their own people met in secret. This was followd by shouts "Slobo, traitor" and "Slobo Saddam".

Numerous speeches were made at the meeting. The rain did not dampen the resolve of the demonstrators.

The rally ended peacefully, because the police force wisely did not interfere on this occasion.

Several Explosions Reported in Pakrac

AU2703162591 Belgrade Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1400 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Zeljko Mandic report from Pakrac on 27 March]

[Text] There were two explosions in Pakrac [Croatia] last night. The bomb thrown at the police station did not explode.

[Mandic] Last night there was a triple bomb attack. Pakrac was shaken by two strong explosions early this morning between 0100 and 0130. In the first attack, which was carried out at the very edge of town, a bomb, which was most probably thrown from a car, caused a 15 cm deep and 40 cm wide crater in the pavement. The explosion also shattered the windows of the surrounding buildings. Immediately after that a second explosion destroyed the front door of the St. Maria Catholic

Church in the center of Pakrac. The pieces of wood, caused by the detonation, also damaged the interior of the church.

Regarding this event, the Serbian Orthodox Eparchy for Slavonia, seated in Pakrac, and the Pakrac communal church, sent a telegram to the Roman Catholic district office in Pakrac expressing regret for and condemnation of this event.

An attack was also carried out on the Pakrac police station. A bomb was thrown at the window of a cellar in which there were policemen. As we were told by Stjepan Kupcjak, commander of the police station, there was no explosion because the bomb failed to go off. The bomb was later found. As Kupcjak told us, an investigation has been carried out in all locations and the culprits are being sought. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has also been informed about these events.

Slovenia's Peterle on Independence Timetable

AU2703112391 Vienna DIE PRESSE in German 27 Mar 91 p 2

[Interview with Slovenian Prime Minister Peterle by Peter Martos in Vienna; date not given: "Early Secession if We Are Forced by the Situation"]

[Text] [Martos] The meeting between the presidents of Croatia and Serbia, Franjo Tudjman and Slobodan Milosevic, has been viewed as a hopeful sign for a peaceful solution to the Yugoslav crisis. How does the Slovene prime minister see the situation?

[Peterle] Personally I am glad that the meeting took place, which dealt exclusively with relations between Croatia and Serbia. We have waited for this meeting for a long time. It will also be for Slovenia's benefit if the two peoples solve their conflict in a peaceful way. Above all, this means an end to the provocations. We need a normal dissolution of Yugoslavia and a normal solution to the problems.

[Martos] Are you speaking of dissolution or a solution to the problems?

Deputy Karel Smolle, Slovenia's representative in Austria, who translated Peterle's statements, stated: "The word that the prime minister used can mean both dissolution and solution: He means a solution to the problems between the Croats and Serbs."

[Martos] We are not only dealing with a linguistic problem. What is Slovenia's timetable for its secession from Yugoslavia?

[Peterle] The Slovene Assembly has made a decisions according to which all individual aspects of independence are to be settled by June. We naturally want to achieve proper and qualitatively good solutions. We would only decide in favor of an earlier date if forced by the situation.

[Martos] Can you describe such a situation?

[Peterle] The use of force and the declaration of a state of emergency by Belgrade.

[Martos] The next round of talks between the republics will take place in Split on Thursday [28 March]. Do you think that it will be possible to narrow the gap between the individual standpoints?

[Peterle] We know from experience that talks that last for months may focus for hours on the agenda. On various occasions, the participants were content with the agreement that they would meet again. These are very costly talks, because the decay of Yugoslavia continues at a rapid pace in the meantime.

[Martos] Thus, it would be cheaper if Slovenia broke with Yugoslavia as soon as possible. Will Slovenia declare its full sovereignty in June?

[Peterle] In the coming three months we will hold talks and conclude agreements on the distribution of assets, debts, and property, and we will also discuss a minimum degree of functioning of the federal state during a transition period. After that, we will be independent.

[Martos] One of the main problems on the path toward independence is a separate currency. When will you have your own currency?

[Peterle] We are preparing a whole package of economic laws that will also affect the monetary sphere, including the introduction of a separate currency. We will adopt the package by June.

Slovene Assembly Hears Budget, Defense Bills

LD2703213491 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1846 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Ljubljana, March 27 (TANJUG)—Slovenian Defense Minister Janez Jansa today proposed to the republican Assembly to adopt a defense bill before a new republican constitution.

In substantiaton, Jansa said that current "developments are oscillating somewhere between a state of emergency and a violent settlement of the constitutional crisis in Yugoslavia." These developments are "among the biggest generators of instability, blocking Slovenia's path to the implementation of its decision on independence, reached in a plebiscite", Jansa said.

The Army leadership is again turning to Slovenia, but its demands on the northwestern republic are no longer being made through the Yugoslav State Presidency, as has been the case so far, but through the federal government and the federal chamber of the Assembly of Yugoslavia, said Jansa.

He went on to say that the defense bill omits some solutios criticized as "remnants of the totalitarian order". The bill envisages for reducing by 70 percent the number of firms and institutions engaged in defense

preparations, and for the standing territorial defense troops not to be members of parties, which aims at divesting the defense of political and party influences.

Slovenian Premier Lojze Peterle proposed to parliament a bill on a budget of 69,637 million dinars (about 7,735 million German marks), a 5.8 percent cut on an earlier proposal. Peterle said that further cuts are not possible.

At parliament's demand, outlays for the Slovenian defense have been reduced by 12 percent, and those for the Slovenian police, by six percent, said Peterle.

Budget Cuts Proposed to Assembly

LD2703171191 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1225 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Ljubljana, 27 Mar (TANJUG)—At the demand of delegates, the proposed republican budget, compared with the draft of this document, reduces defense funds by 12 percent. This was said by Slovene Prime Minister Lojze Peterle during today's joint session of all three chambers of the [Slovene] republican assembly.

In relation to our expenditure for the Yugoslav People's Army [JNA] last year the expenditure for our own defense is almost 50 percent down. Any further reduction will pose a threat in this area, Peterle said.

Speaking to the deputies, Peterle also said that the funds in the proposed budget earmarked for the Slovene police forces are 6 percent down compared with the original draft. The resources for the work of the Secretariat for International Cooperation has been reduced to about 55 million dinars. Peterle added that the anticipated funds for the business transferred from the federation to the republics has also been cut considerably.

Pucnik Criticizes Markovic, Slovene Deputies

AU2703194391 Belgrade POLITIKA in Serbo-Croatian 27 Mar 91 p 12

[M. Laketic report:"SFRY Prime Minister and Slovene Federal Deputies Sharply Criticized"]

[Text] Ljubljana, 22 Mar—Last night, the Slovene Social Democratic Party Presidium held a session that was presided over by party leader Joze Pucnik, who is also the Demos chief. It was concluded that it is now high time to accomplish the plebiscitary decision on Slovenia's secession.

According to Pucnik, Slovenia has nothing to benefit from its coalition with Croatia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, and Macedonia. Also, Slovenia should take advantage of the present bad political situation in Yugoslavia, as much as possible, to finally reach its goal.

At the same time, Pucnik addressed a string of complaints to the federal government and its prime minister because of their "coalition" with Serbia and the Yugoslav People's Army. He ascertained that "Ante Markovic is one of the biggest bluffers that ever managed to obtain Europe's support for his "real" socialist concept of reform." In his criticism Pucnik did not even spare the Slovene representatives in the federal government and its vice president Zivko Pregl.

Members of the Slovene Social Democratic Party supported all Pucnik's assessments and ordered their deputies in the Republican Legislature to initiate a procedure for the realization of the plebiscitary decision on Slovenia's secession in two weeks' time.

Slovene Trade Unions Assail Arms Expenditure

LD2703182691 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1121 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Ljubljana, 27 Mar (TANJUG)—The Slovene defense system is unassailable and is protected like a sacred cow, while workers are already starving. Thus Slovenia's biggest enemy is poverty, while at the same time 9 billion dinars was spent on armament last year.

This was stressed in discussions at a session today of the Council of Slovene Free Trade Unions, which followed a report on the catastrophic position of the Slovene economy, a huge part of which is facing bankruptcy. Ministers of defense, police, and international relations, it was said at the session, shared among themselves the biggest part of the budget, while other departments were left with no crumbs, stealing from each other to secure temporary existence.

One of those taking part in the discussion asked how it is possible that workers on strike or at some protest rallies criticize and attack the republican government, while at the same time, at party meetings, they support the sovereignty of Slovenia, by earmarking huge funds for armament. We are not for armament on one side, and lack of bread on the other, it was stressed several times during the discussion, and an opinion was expressed that the final goal of the trade unions should be the toppling of such a government. [passage omitted]

Kosovo Serbs Form New Association

AU2703182191 Belgrade BORBA in Serbo-Croatian 19 Mar 91 p 32

[M. A. report: "National Interests Above Party Interests"]

[Text] Kosovo Polje—The initiative committee of the new nonpolitical association "Only Harmony Will Save Serbs" [Samo Sloga Spasava Serbe] [SSSS] met in Kosovo Polje yesterday and was attended by many representatives from all over Kosovo-Metohija. In the statement issued on this occasion it was declared that the new association has the "multiparty character, whose platform is based on the rallying of all Serbs, regardless of their party or other affiliations, and above all on the struggle for the national interests of the Serbian nation."

Regarding the current situation in Serbia and Yugoslavia, "the association appeals to all Serbs and party leaders for unity, struggle for democratic relations in Serbia, for truth without any manipulations, and for the true interests of the Serbian nation all over Yugoslavia."

Stevica Lazic, one of the original members of the Serbian resistance movements, was elected president of the initiative committee.

It is rumored that many people left the "Bozur" association because "it got linked to only one party, because it admits that it is an 'appendix' of the Socialist Party of Serbia, and because it speaks on behalf of the people without consulting them."

Sarajevo Press Freedom Protest Meeting

LD2703174191 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1335 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Sarajevo, 27 Mar (TANJUG)—A protest meeting for press freedom was held outside the Bosnia-Hercegovina Assembly building today. In addition to OSLOBODJENJE employees, Sarajevo Radio and TV journalists and other working people, theater artists, writers, students and citizens were also present at the meeting.

In front of about 4,000 people, demands were read out that were motivated by the changes adopted under an emergency procedure regarding the law on OSLOBODJENJE and Sarajevo Radio and TV, whereby the republican assembly will in future nominate the top personnel in these media houses.

The employees in these houses, who before the election had the right to decide about this themselves, have appraised these changes as undemocratic. One of the decisions taken during the meeting was that Information Minister Velibor Ostojic and his deputy Mustafa Mujagic should resign.

Serbian-Montenegrin Talks on Democratic Union

LD2703222291 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1949 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Titograd, 27 Mar (TANJUG)—Momir Bulatovic, president of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro Presidency, and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, as well as Milo Djukanovic and Dragutin Zelenovic, the presidents of the two republican governments, met today in Titograd.

In the lengthy and friendly talks views were exchanged about current issues regarding the country's political and economic situation and ways of developing cooperation between the two republics, especially economic cooperation.

The two sides fully agreed in their appraisal of the country's key economic and political problems, and concluded that a peaceful resolution of the Yugoslav crisis is the only humane and democratic solution to the existing problems. Therefore, it is necessary that a constitution and laws regulate on equal basis the fulfillment of the interests of all nations. In this sense, the Republics of Montenegro and Serbia will not accept unilateral decisions, especially if these affect interests of the Montenegrin and Serbian people and their legitimate right to live in one state.

Joint Montenegrin and Serbian support was confirmed for the preservation of Yugoslavia as a federal state of equal nations willing to live in it. The talks underscored a joint stance to the effect that only Yugoslav nations can decide about the fate of Yugoslavia on the basis of full equality and the right of nations to self-determination, including the right to secession.

The Montenegrin and Serbian people want to live as equal partners with others in a common state, which should be organized as a democratic federation. At the same time, the Montenegrin and Serbian people respect the right of each nation to determine their fate provided that such decisions do not endanger the rights of other nations.

In line with this, a framework for a Yugoslav state can be determined only on the basis of equal exercise of nations' right to self-determination, which can be expressed most fully through referendum.

Participants in the talks agreed that the key issues regarding Yugoslavia's political future and the crisis in the country should be resolved as soon as possible and at the latest within two months, especially bearing in mind the grave consequences of the political and economic crisis that has been worsening daily and that has been threatening the existence of the majority of Yugoslav citizens. [passage omitted]

Bozovic Denies Accusations About Media Role

AU2703123091 Novi Sad DNEVNIK in Serbo-Croatian 22 Mar 91 p 1

[Text] Novi Sad, 21 March—The media in Vojvodina, founded by the provincial assembly, have fully implemented the basic principles of their own programmatic concepts, even though there have been deviations in certain media, particularly the Hungarian-language newspapers.

This was emphasized at today's session of the Executive Council of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, which was partly devoted to the current situation in the province's media.

The decision by the Vojvodina Assembly to transfer some founders' rights to its Executive Council is not at variance with the Law on Public Information, Provincial Information Secretary Milan Lucic stressed, adding that the SFRY Assembly did the same thing regarding the Federal Executive Council. According to Vojvodina Executive Council President Radoman Bozovic, this

involves temporary decisions that will be in force until the adoption of a new information law and a new law on the radio and television of Serbia, which will apply over the republic's entire territory.

Bozovic refuted accusations made by the Independent Journalists Association and certain editorial boards that he is the "chief editor of all the local media" and proposed that all resignation demands be discussed openly at the next session of the Vojvodina Assembly.

The session heard that the main newspaper-publishing and information houses in the province registered a loss of 15.5 million dinars last year. Easily the greatest loss maker is Novi Sad Radio and Television, which has 2,500 workers, of which a large number have been made redundant due to technological advances.

State of National Journalism Viewed

AU2703172591 Belgrade BORBA in Serbo-Croatian 26 Mar 91 p 8

[Zoran Lukovic commentary: "Voice Against the Balkan Richelieus"]

[Text] Journalism in Yugoslavia is experiencing a catharsis, after which it can and must in the future be founded on pillars of professional independence and responsibility to the public.

Of course, one should not have the illusion that everything will be easy, quick, and simple. The information instruments through which the political elites have dictated the rhythm and meaning of everyday life will not give up just like that.

The government of the Republic of Bosnia-Hercegovina hurried to endorse the two proposed bills that deprive the journalists in this republic of the right to choose their own leaders. The endorsed and achieved professional independence and the atmosphere of open dialogue and respect for the facts in managing what is understood as "the public information media" are being brought into question.

It is not by chance that the republican center of Sarajevo is the sanctuary and place for all those who have craved elements of a profession. Without idealizing the situation there, it can be stated without exaggeration that news has priority over interpretation, that journalism in Sarajevo has had its own Yugoslav highlights with the participation of conveyors of the public word from virtually all the rigidly closed republics. The Bosnia-Hercegovina public immediately reacted vehemently and justifiably when, in the old tradition, the new minister Ostojic opposed Yutel and when some other people expressed the intention to impose, as relevant criteria for editorial positions in OSLOBODJENJE, unacceptable national standards instead of expertise and ability. The public is reacting even now to the government's proposal that is obviously motivated by the intention to subject reporting to control to prevent unpleasant truths.

Strivings for a single-party view of reality are not a speciality of the new-old political parties. Attacks on the media out of narrow political interests are everywhere while only the conditions and reasons are different. The Executive Council of the Skopje City Assembly, which is comprised solely of members of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Movement for Macedonian National Unity, decided to stop financing VECER because, as it claims, this newspaper "does not provide objectivity and lack of bias." The editorial board has already reacted and announced that it will not "dance to the council's tune," especially as VECER received only six percent of its total finance from the city coffers last year.

The situation is similar in the northern-most Yugoslav republic. There is another estate over the "fourth estate" here too. Purges in Radio Television Slovenia are already old hat. The most recent example of an assault on the profession and the right of citizens to prompt and objective reporting was the attempt by Slovene Legislative President France Bucar to ensure that he and the Assembly decide which journalist is (un)desirable as a reporter covering the legislative sessions.

Protests have recently been increasing against the editorial policy of Croatian Radio and Television and the information blockade in the Croatian press. In some open letters from the public, it is resolutely stated that radio and television programming serves the propaganda of the ruling party. As in any other republics in such situations, the citizens are paying the price. The pressures to which SLOBODNA DALMACIJA has been exposed could be the theme of a rather long story.

The lecture that was learned in Terazije Street gave impetus to journalists and certified their right to finally put an end to fundamental disrespect for the professional code. The bastions of bias and obedience to a single party, Belgrade Television and POLITIKA publications, are no longer untouchable. Journalism in Serbia has risen to its feet and it would be a mistake to believe, although these ideas still exist, that it will return to the old habit of following dictates. The speed of change is slow but quite certainly irrevocable.

Journalism in Yugoslavia is now sufficiently mature to be able to use its own strength and intellectual potential, despite the continuing influences of national political elites, to end the media war and bring it to a final halt. Simply, the right to the truth has been and will be stronger than force, no matter whether on someone's orders this force is represented in blue, khaki, or some newly created uniforms with sinister undertones. The mental pollution of the information area (of course, not everyone participated in this, either as media or individuals) is huge and as a profession. Journalism must now

fight to the end for reason and tolerance in the public presentation of different interests and views. It is natural not to have an identity of views and it is even desirable, but it should no longer happen that this fact is the excuse and reason for sowing hatred.

It is therefore time for Yugoslav journalism to define its position regarding what it follows on quite new foundations, respecting the rule that Yugoslavism is not necessarily unitarism and what is national is not necessarily nationalism. The proposal that fellow journalist Zlatko Dizdarevic presented in a discussion that was held off the record and which was supported by a group of colleagues from various Yugoslav editorial boards deserves attention and deserves to be put into practice. Artificially and unnecessarily divided, we will find it more difficult to rise to the honest challenges of the profession for the citizens and public of the country to be informed about everything that is happening in a prompt and truthful way. Therefore, a day-long conference of those journalists who have respected professional criteria above everything else and do not want to stop doing this in the future, would be the opportunity for the start of an independent journalism that is totally free from the authorities and parties. The sooner the better. Each at their own expense. In which town in this country it would be held is of secondary importance I am in favor!

Transport, Communications Agreement Signed

LD2703153491 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1405 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Belgrade, March 27 (TANJUG)—The representatives of Yugoslavia and the European Community have initialled an agreement on transport and communications which is to be signed soon.

This will be the first agreement which the E.C. concluded with a non-E.C. country, as Yugoslav Transport and Communications Minister Joze Slokar told a news conference today.

The agreement will give the Yugoslav transport and communication system equal status on the European market and provide quick and free transit to the Middle East for the E.C. countries.

The agreement envisages that the European Investment Bank give loans valued up to half the necessary funds for the construction and modernization of Yugoslavia's principal roads and railway lines from Jesenice to Gevgelia.

An agreement on a 740-million-dollar credit with a 15-year deferred payment and a 7-year grace period has already been reached. It was also agreed that Yugoslavia be granted 100 million dollars in allowances for the quick construction and modernization of its road and railway network.

Yugoslav and E.C. representatives also agreed on signing agreements on air, river, naval and combined transport and communications.

National Bank Official Details Foreign Debt

AU2703193991 Belgrade BORBA in Serbo-Croatian 25 Mar 91 p 2

[TANJUG report: "Door To Capital Slammed Shut"]

[Excerpt] Belgrade—The capital market is now to all intents and purposes closed to Yugoslavia. Business banks and businesses can obtain loans only on the basis of long-term ties and on the basis of trusting those who borrow the money. The political risk is a decisive factor for this situation. Moreover, the balance of payments has also worsened, and even the reform has not been fully implemented.

Therefore, not even the steady repayment of foreign loans, despite all the difficulties, is of crucial significance for our present position. This was stated by Zarko Trbojevic, vice governor of the National Bank of Yugoslavia, in an interview with TANJUG editor Milos Petkovic.

Yugoslavia can no longer be categorized as a country with a large debt because its convertible medium-term and long-term debt amounted to $15.9 billion at the end of last year. These liabilities are considerably reduced when one takes into account our debts in terms of loans to other countries—more than $3 billion. Nevertheless, our situation is becoming increasingly dramatic, the vice governor of the National Bank of Yugoslavia stressed.

This year, $4.3 billion (the principle and interest) should be paid off. Because of the fall in industrial production and unsatisfactory exports, this amount considerably reduces the foreign currency earnings by 22.5 percent. The situation in the country is having an adverse effect on earnings from tourism and the number of remittances from abroad. Likewise, it can quite certainly be claimed that more significant support from foreign creditors will be lacking if political tensions in the country are not radically reduced. A more perceptible reduction in foreign currency reserves is inevitable, which could effect the level of indebtedness. [passage omitted]